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BEST FOR JOBS

WANTED	
Executive	95K
Director	60K
Consultant	40K
Graduate	20K
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116 ill and 20 new victims a day Food poison outbreak kills 4 more

By Shirley English

FOUR people died yesterday in a Scottish food poisoning epidemic that has left more than a hundred ill and at least two children with kidney damage. Another man died in hospital on Tuesday.

The outbreak, which has been linked to cooked meat and pies supplied by Scotland's butchers of the year, is believed to be claiming twenty victims a day. Further cases are expected, since the illness — which can be spread from person to person as well as through contaminated food — can take more than a week to incubate.

The butchers concerned supply up to thirty wholesale and retail outlets across Scotland, but the products are not labelled and the Scottish Office last night warned people all over the country to beware of any cooked or pre-prepared meat bought in the past week.

The illness is caused by the E-coli 0157 bacteria — known in America as the hamburger bug — and the present epidemic is the worst recorded in Britain. At least forty people were being treated in hospital last night and Sir David Carter, Scotland's Chief Medical Officer, said: "This has to be regarded as a serious outbreak. Lanarkshire's public health consultant Dr Steven Almond said: "I think it is going to get worse before it gets better."

It takes fewer than a hundred E-coli organisms to cause an infection whose symptoms include diarrhoea, often bloody, severe abdominal cramps and vomiting. Children and the elderly are susceptible to infection, with those

aged under four the most vulnerable — although all those who have died in the present epidemic have been over 60.

Two of the victims — men aged 80 and 69 — had attended a free lunch at Wishaw Old Parish Church on Monday last week, when the pies were supplied by John M. Barr and Son. Two women in their seventies from the area and another from Bonnybridge, 30 miles to the north, have also died and another woman from Wishaw was critically ill at Glasgow Royal Infirmary.

The total number of suspected cases had last night reached 116, with 107 of them in Lanarkshire. Nineteen children have been taken ill and a girl aged seven and a boy of three are on dialysis after suffering kidney damage. Seven adults were said to be giving cause for concern.

John M. Barr and Son, which employs about forty people, has been Wishaw's main butcher for 28 years and a few months ago was named Scottish butcher of the year. Mr Barr was first told of the outbreak on Friday night and withdrew all meats that might have been contaminated before opening on Saturday morning. He had been allowed to continue selling fresh meat, but he closed as usual at lunchtime yesterday and does not expect to reopen until environmental health officers have completed their investigation, probably tomorrow.

Other outlets in Lothian, Ayrshire, Glasgow, Falkirk and Lanarkshire which sell Mr Barr's meats were alerted

over the weekend. These included three Scottish stores in Bonnybridge and officials have advised people not to eat meat products bought from those shops or from Mr Barr in Wishaw.

Yesterday Mr Barr's solicitor, Owen Ness, said: "He is overwhelmed by how grave the situation has become. He feels the deepest sympathy for the families of those who have died."

"He cannot comment on the eventual outcome of the inquiry, other than to say that he has co-operated fully with the environmental health officers. He himself is satisfied that they have done their utmost to complete this inquiry as soon as possible. He and his staff are giving them every assistance."

The bacteria responsible for the epidemic first emerged in Britain in the early 1980s when a handful of cases were reported. The number has risen ever since, reaching a 656 in 1994 and 1,039 last year. Scotland has a much higher reported rate of infection than the rest of Britain, and the biggest previous outbreak — which affected more than a hundred people in 1994 — was also in Scotland.

The infection is usually caused by undercooked minced beef products, especially beefburgers, but the bacteria can also be transmitted through milk, cheese and untreated water. They can also be passed from person to person unless hygiene is scrupulous, which has resulted in outbreaks in hospitals, child-care centres, nursing homes and other institutions.



Satu-Carita Jaaskelainen, from Finland, on her rounds in Homerton hospital

Race row as black MP attacks jobs for Finns

By Alice Thomson and Dominic Kennedy

DIANE ABBOTT, the Labour MP, has launched an attack on "blonde, blue-eyed Finnish girls" who work in her local hospital.

The MP for Hackney North and Stoke Newington accuses the Finnish nurses of being unfit to work at Homerton Hospital in Hackney because they are white and foreign and "may never have met a black person before, let alone touched one".

Ms Abbott, Britain's first black woman MP, says that the hospital should never have employed 30 Scandinavians to work in the multicultural East End of London. She was immediately branded "racist" by the Tory secretary of the all-party Finland group of MPs, said: "I have never heard such racist rubbish from a Member of Parliament in recent years. It shows complete ignorance."

Ms Abbott's remarks were described as "hysterical and racist" by Homerton hospital. It said the Finns were hired because of a severe nursing shortage. The Finnish nurses were furious. Satu-Carita

Jaaskelainen, 25, a blue-eyed redhead from Helsinki, who arrived to work as a staff nurse in Hackney last month said: "I can't find the words to express how angry I am because we are all human beings."

She said she only knew two of her fellow nurses from Finland who were blonde and one of the nurses is black. "We do have blue eyes as much as Indian people have brown eyes. There is nothing I can do about that. It's ridiculous. I don't see what difference it makes if I did have blonde hair and blue eyes with my

competence in my work," she said.

In a column in her local newspaper, the *Hackney Gazette*, Ms Abbott wrote: "I am sure that these young women are charming. But they are basically here to improve their English and are unlikely to give the British health service a lifetime's commitment."

She added: "I am surprised that they choose to bring in blonde, blue-eyed girls from Finland, instead of nurses from the Caribbean who know the language and understand British culture and institutions. Are Finnish girls, who may never have met a black person before, let alone touched one, best suited to nurse in multicultural Hackney?"

The Finnish Embassy said that most Finns were not blonde and blue-eyed and that it was ludicrous to say that Finnish nurses had never met anyone black.

The outspoken MP for Hackney North and Stoke Newington said that black nurses had been subjected to racism by being confined to the worst jobs. "My mother was a nurse and I know



Abbott surprised at choice of blondes

Continued on page 2, col 5

House prices still rising in England

By Sara McConnell

HOUSE prices continue to rise in most of England, with London and the South East enjoying the biggest increases, according to official figures from the Land Register. Prices in Greater London rose by 6.3 per cent in the quarter to September, while other parts of the South East, including Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, saw increases of nearly 7 per cent.

At the other end of the scale, prices in Merthyr Tydfil in Wales dropped by 16 per cent between the second and third quarters of this year, while prices in the North and Midlands were patchy.

The figures are based on completed property sales but do not take into account the mix of property or seasonal factors. The average price of new flats and maisonettes has risen by nearly a third over the past 12 months. Older and converted flats showed a rise of nearly 9 per cent, with the average increase in flat prices being 11 per cent.

Halifax Building Society figures next week are expected to confirm that the recovery is continuing. Last month the society reported a 1.6 per cent increase, the highest monthly rise since February 1994.

Rising flat prices were yesterday hailed by estate agents as evidence that more first time buyers have decided to commit themselves.

Council tax set for 6% increase

Council taxes are likely to rise by at least 6 per cent next year after an even tighter squeeze on local government.

Town hall leaders had asked John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, for an extra £2.3 billion to maintain services at their present level, but for the third year running he obtained less than half that amount. Page 10

Goldsmith puts the question

Sir James Goldsmith has disclosed the wording of the referendum question his party wants putting to the British people: "Do you want the United Kingdom to be part of a federal Europe or do you want the United Kingdom to remain an independent nation?"

Dying Goon Bentine joked with Prince

By Alan Hamilton

MICHAEL BENTINE, a founding member of the 1950s radio series *The Goon Show*, has died from prostate cancer. He was 72. The Prince of Wales was among his last visitors at the Royal Marsden Hospital in London.

Richard Bentine, the comedian's son, said the Prince had spent an hour with his father on Monday, when the dying performer was barely able to recognise his own family. During the visit, Bentine had revived, recognised his royal visitor

and engaged in "a ridiculous funny conversation". He added: "It was an extraordinarily kind and gentle gesture."

Born in Watford, Hertfordshire, of a Peruvian father and educated at Eton, Bentine had a lifelong interest in the paranormal, and organised faith-healing sessions to help mend the Prince's arm after he broke it in a polo accident in 1990.

St James's Palace said last night that the Prince — a lifelong admirer of *The Goons* — had been very sad to learn of Bentine's death. Sir Harry Scobie, a fellow-founder of the Goons with Spike

Milligan and the late Peter Sellers, has contacted Bentine's family to offer condolences.

Bentine appeared in 41 episodes of *The Goon Show* before embarking on a solo career with television series such as *The Bumblebees* and *It's A Square World*. His private life was not without tragedy: his parents and two of his daughters died of cancer, and he refused chemotherapy treatment for himself, saying he had seen what it had done to his children.

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French lorry drivers scent victory after retiring deal

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

IN AN attempt to buy off striking lorry drivers, the French Government yesterday pledged to fund earlier retirement and shorter working hours in a draft agreement between union leaders and haulage companies.

The lorry-blockades of roads, ports and fuel depots that have paralysed the country for ten days remained in place, however, as union leaders pressed their demands for higher wages.

After a 20-hour negotiating session Robert Cros, the government-appointed mediator, announced that a consensus had been reached allowing drivers with 25 years' experience to retire at 55, rather than 60, on 75 per cent of salary. Under the draft accord, the state agreed to help to fund benefits for retired lorry drivers from the age of 57.

The Government also agreed that haulage companies would pay reduced payroll charges in return for reducing working hours. Government officials said last night that an end to the dispute was imminent, but union leaders, who are demanding a 10 per cent wage rise, described a 1 per cent offer by employers as "insulting".

Things have moved forward, Roger Pottier of the powerful Force Ouvrière said, but he insisted that the 240 blockades to French roads would be maintained until a full agreement was reached.

Bernard Pons, the Transport Minister, said "We are on the verge of ending this crisis. We are pursuing our efforts on the pay issue so that we can reach an agreement swiftly."

Other unions immediately accused the Government of

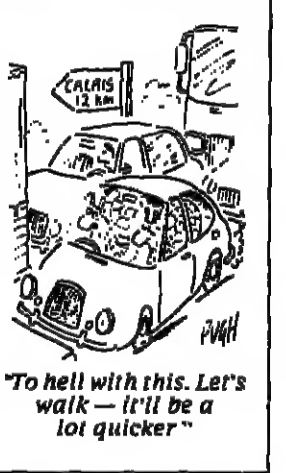
favouring employers by trying to buy its way out of the dispute with tax-payers' money.

A "day of action" called by union chiefs had little effect yesterday, but a 24-hour strike by rail workers blocked the main line between Paris and the port of Le Havre and a similar stoppage disrupted rail traffic at Nantes. A two-day strike by Air France and Air France Europe cut one third of long-haul flights and half the domestic service.

With more than 1,000 British drivers still stranded on the Continent, John Major yesterday called on the French Government to intervene to free them. "We think they have an obligation firstly to end this dispute as speedily as possible and secondly to meet compensation claims for damage and offer guarantees that the compensation would be paid."

Desperate to avoid a repeat of the 1995 lorry drivers' strike, the Government is

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Heseltine basks in reflected glory as Scots toast an absent friend

Missing from the *Spectator*-Highland Park Whisky awards ceremony yesterday, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had nevertheless started in style. Pink with pleasure at his 26p cut in whisky duty, managers from Highland Park beamed across every table at the Savoy.

At the date, viewed from my vantage point through a bank of fresh flowers, Michael Heseltine, guest of honour and eloquent as ever, radiated the gracious, detached air he now adopts on public occasions. He

has never quite got over being called "President". Starting mistily over the foliage and into the middle distance, our Deputy Prime Minister looked as though he should be wearing medals, a hip-to-shoulder silk sash, or a plumed hat.

The Editor of the *Spectator*, Frank Johnson, recalled Heseltine's command of the regeneration of Merseyside — "the Curzon of the Scousers," he said. I recognised the idiom and thought-process of a fellow-satirist. Frank Johnson was parliamentary sketchwriter for *The Times* for much

of the 1980s. The award of Backbencher of the Year went jointly to Julian Brazier (C, Canterbury) and Paul Flynn (Lab, Newport W). Both are fearless men with that faintly nutty quality without which it is hard to be noticed on a modern back bench.

Captain Brazier, who from the backbenches has relied sometimes more on the battering ram of persistence than the rapier of intellect, has mounted magnificent rearguard actions in defence of the institution of marriage and the married quarters of service



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

people. He gave a grateful, likeable speech of thanks, ending in a story about General Sherman in the jungle, which nobody could quite understand. Brazier could be the Eric Cantona of the Tory benches.

The indefatigable Mr Flynn used the Savoy for yet another

assault on bullbats and tabloid newspapers.

Peer of the Year, Earl Russell, caused laughter when he admitted that the hereditary principle was a lottery, but many are in favour of lotteries these days. Conrad Russell is Bertrand Russell's grandson. In life's genetic

storm, he suggested, "lightning may strike twice".

Menzies Campbell (Lib-Dem, Fife NE), awarded the Member to Watch trophy, caused gales of laughter with a story from his younger days which my colleague on the *Times* Diary recounts within.

The Home Office's Ann Widdecombe (Minister to Watch) repeated, against herself, the "Doris Karloff" gibe which tabloids have used against her.

A gritty and plainspeaking woman, what Miss Widdecombe lacks in grace

she makes up for in honesty and humour. She described a day in which she had to spend an afternoon in television studios explaining a decision not to deport someone whose deportation she had spent the morning defending. Rowing, she said, was the sport which best prepared you for politics: "You look one way and move the other."

As Debater of the Year, Robin Cook mischievously thanked David Mellor and Michael Heseltine for guaranteeing the success of his speech on the Scott Report by their

own interruptions. Michael Forsyth, winner of the Parliamentary of the Year award and inventor of the "larian tax" tag, was credited with having turned Scottish devotion into an embarrassment for the Labour Front bench.

Congratulating him later on his award, Forsyth's Labour Shadow, George Robertson (a previous winner), reminded him that final judgment would come from the Scottish people, "I hope he enjoys the award in his retirement."

Lovely people, Parliamentarians.

French lorry driver dispute spreads chaos into Britain

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

THE paralysis created by French lorry drivers' dispute spread into southern Britain yesterday, as hundreds of freight vehicles were marshalled away from the Port of Dover into a waiting compound near Ashford in Kent.

The thousands of so drivers who had entered the park by midday had faced waits of up to 24 hours for permission to leave the compound and drive on to the coast. With the lorry

park filled to capacity, many side roads leading to it filled with queues of juggernauts.

In Dover, the closure of the Channel Tunnel, after the recent fire, combined with the huge volume of lorries battling their way to the Continent led to queues of trucks stretching for miles out of the town. Twenty miles away in Ashford, in an attempt to impose some order on the chaotic mass of lorries head-

ing for the port, Kent police and Ashford council organised a quasi-military operation in which all drivers had to report to the lorry park and obtain a numbered ticket. Drivers, many waiting on side roads after the park became full, waited to be let out in convoy, 25 at a time, under police escort.

Having escaped the Ashford turmoil, drivers then had to wait up to six hours at Dover for sailings to Zeebrugge in Belgium rather than Calais, a journey of three hours 45 minutes compared with just over an hour to the French coast.

A spokeswoman for Dover Harbour Board said that ferry companies had arranged extra sailings for the freight lorries and they were trying to help drivers to get away as quickly as possible.

In Ashford's lorry park waiting drivers swapped tales of woe over a fry-up and mugs of tea. Many feared that their jobs were at risk, with the smaller haulage companies losing large sums during the French dispute. Others who had spent the night in the driver cabin in the park, reflected gloomily on extra days spent away from the family and longer onward journeys from Zeebrugge



Lorries queuing yesterday along the A2070 near Ashford, where they are being held until a ferry is available

rather than Calais, causing more disruption to their plans. The only consoling thought for British drivers was the rumour that English police were being less than helpful to French lorry-drivers who had made it over to this side of the Channel, giving wrong directions and "accidental" misinformation.

Harry Keep, from Croydon, had been in the lorry park since 10.30pm on Tuesday. "I got down to Dover, got told to turn round by the police and come back here and have been here ever since. I am supposed to be picking up furniture in Italy on Thursday morning and if I don't get there I don't get paid, but it's not looking too good is it? My job's on the line here."

Last week Mr Keep spent five days stuck in a blockade 150 miles out of Calais. "In the

end I'd had enough, so I drove over fields to get away, on to Calais where I had to dump the lorry and come over to Dover as a foot passenger. The lorry's still there," he said. "Conditions over there are terrible. We were given a stick of bread and a bottle of water to last us days and when we asked about food, the French police said: 'Eat the grass'."

Martin Scrowther and Colin Morris were enjoying a cup of tea and a cigarette before heading off home. "We've both been told to forget it," Mr Scrowther said. "We've been here since midnight waiting and our companies have now told us to turn back. I've got to try again on Saturday and hope for the best. The problem is that I get paid per trip so I don't earn anything if I don't deliver the goods, even if I've spent 12 days on the road."

There's lots of guys like me who will end up out of pocket," Mr Morris, whose company is based in Braintree, Essex, said he feared that his boss, who owns the eight lorries, could be put out of business.

"He's going to find it really tough. Something like this means he's losing money like there's no tomorrow. It's all very well talking about compensation but it takes forever and it could come too late."

The jam was preventing Peter Horsley, who had driven from his Manchester-based haulage firm on Tuesday, from rescuing a colleague who had been stranded on the Continent in a broken-down lorry since Monday morning. "I've been sent with a trailer to rescue this poor guy in Berlin who broke down as he was on his way to deliver goods to Poland. He's got

dangerous resins in the back of his cab which need to be kept at a constant temperature but he's running out of diesel to keep the fridge going."

"He can't leave the vehicle and he's waiting for me," Mr Horsley said. "I got to Dover last night but was turned away so I have been waiting here since midnight until I can go on to Zeebrugge. God knows what I will find there."

Unsurprisingly, sympathy for their French colleagues was in short supply. "They're holding everyone to ransom," Mr Scrowther said. "You can sympathise to an extent, but their conditions are already better than ours as they stand and they've got no right to drag us all down in their dispute."

Lorry strike deal

Continued from page 1
tion of last year's crippling 24-day transport strike. President Chirac personally applied pressure for a quick resolution to the dispute.

Local authorities have imposed rationing to ensure sufficient fuel for emergency vehicles, long queues formed at many petrol stations and school buses stopped running in parts of southern France through lack of fuel. Farmers have reported feed shortages due to the disruption of grain shipments and several factories have been forced to stop production.

Any agreement to end the strike will have to be approved by union members, union

negotiators said. But with two of their three main demands now agreed in principle, some union leaders were already claiming victory last night.

By agreeing to help fund the strikers' demands, Alain Juppé, the deeply unpopular prime minister, may have won himself a much-needed respite and avoided the sort of widespread labour rebellion that brought the country to its knees last winter.

But at a time of poor economic performance, widespread anger and rising unemployment in both the private and public sectors, he has set a dangerous precedent starkly at odds with his calls for cuts in state spending.

'Lord Chancellor's role should go'

By FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

ONE of the most senior judges in England and Wales last night called for the removal of the Lord Chancellor as the head of the judiciary.

Lord Steyn, a law lord, said: "The proposition that a Cabinet minister must be head of our judiciary in England is no longer sustainable on either constitutional or pragmatic grounds." He also called for the removal of the office of Attorney-General, who supervises criminal proceedings, from the political arena.

In a controversial address to the Administrative Law Bar Association, Lord Steyn said that the Lord Chancellor gave the appearance of speaking neutrally and impartially as head of the judiciary. But he went on: "The truth is different. Under governments of all complexions, the Lord

Chancellor is always a spokesman for the government in the furtherance of its party political agenda."

Recently, he said, financial constraints on the administration of justice had been controversial. The Lord Chancellor (Lord Mackay of Clashfern) as a Cabinet member represented the voice of reform guided by a Treasury perspective.

But the view of judges was rather different, Lord Steyn said. They did not "wholeheartedly share the modern adoration of the deity of economy," he said. "On the whole they put justice first." That view could best be put by the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Steyn suggested. "He should be the head of the judiciary in England and Wales."

His remarks echoed concerns of some but not all judges that the Lord Chancellor no longer represents their views when these conflict with those of Government

and particularly of the Treasury.

Lord Steyn went on to call for similar reforms in respect of the office of Attorney-General, a post at present held by Sir Nicholas Lyell, QC. That office should be removed from the political arena and made an independent office outside government, Lord Steyn said. Alternatively, he should hand over his role in supervising criminal proceedings and in occasionally instituting civil proceedings.

The Attorney General was a "political figure responsive to public pressure." There were safeguards against any abuse of his office but those depended on weak conventions, such as that he did not take orders from Government but could seek ministers' views. Another convention was that he was not influenced by party political considerations but could take account of public policy.

MP in 'blonde nurses' row

Continued from page 1
many nurses. Black nurses are leaving the profession all the time because of racism and lack of career development.

"For years many black nurses have found themselves confined to the night shift and unglamorous specialisms like mental health and geriatric nursing," she said.

Her comments have provoked letters of complaint. But Ms Abbott insisted her remarks were not racist. She said: "My argument is not that they shouldn't employ white nurses. My argument is that they should employ local people."

A spokesman for the hospital said her comments had

caused "deep upset" to both patients and staff. "We have always thought that colour is not important, it is your professionalism that counts," said Carol Bailey, the Homerton's director of human resources.

She added: "Of course we would take on black nurses if we could. But the fact is that like every other London hospital, we are facing a huge shortage of applicants."

Patients made it clear they thought the Finnish nurses were highly professional. Miss Jaskelainen's patient, Regina Spio, from Ghana, who is being treated for stomach pains on Harley general surgery ward, condemned Ms

Abbott's attack. "I think it is racist. What has the colour of her hair got to do with her job?"

The Finnish nurses were brought to Britain by a specialist agency to fill the shortfall in training staff. Another 20 are due to arrive next year. They will be joined by ten black and white nurses from South Africa. The hospital has 42 per cent black or Asian nurses in line with the local population.

Stephen Scott, a non-executive director of the hospital trust, has written to Ms Abbott: "I take it that your hysterical tirade about blonde, blue-eyed girls from Finland also includes those from Northern Ireland and Eire." The Royal College of Nursing last night said that Ms Abbott had seriously overreacted. "Nursing is a multi-cultural profession," it said.

Scottish link to Budget leak

The search for the Whitehall sleaze who leaked the Budget papers has been switched to the Scottish Office. Detectives from Scotland Yard are planning to interview Scottish Office staff based in London and Edinburgh who had access to the 100 documents which were handed over to the *Daily Mirror*.

Army blows up boy's bomb kit

An army bomb disposal team sealed off a housing estate for three hours while they carried out a controlled explosion on a schoolboy's chemistry kit. They were called in after Glynis Towers, 16, blew up his bedroom in an experiment with homemade explosives on the Darrass Hall estate near Newcastle upon Tyne.

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A little counter espionage as former MI5 chief goes over to M&S



BY JOHN ASHWORTH AND MICHAEL EVANS

AFTER four years protecting the safety of the realm against spies and saboteurs, the former MI5 chief Dame Stella Rimington emerged in a new guise yesterday, with a top job helping to protect the interests of Britain's best-known store chain.

As a non-executive director of Marks & Spencer, her world will not contain quite the secrecy of her previous occupation, having more to do now with underwear than undercover, but the High Street giant managed to enter into the spirit of things by refusing to say

how they recruited their newest operative.

However, the files reveal a previous link. Dame Stella, 61, was once photographed entering her local M&S store in London for a little shopping. The picture appeared in a national newspaper, which forced her to move house for security reasons, much to her regret.

Since retiring as Director-General of the Security Service in April, she has been acclimatising herself to the "outside world" beyond counter-espionage, terrorism and subversion.

After her appointment was announced by the company, she let it

be known that she was delighted to be joining the board. "As well as being a long-standing customer of theirs, I am a great admirer of their management style, and their ability to change with the times," she said.

"I think that my own experience of managing a public service organisation through a period of great change will enable me to bring a useful additional dimension to the board team."

During her four years as Director-General of MI5, she became Britain's best-known spy chief, shrugging off media nicknames such as "the housewife superspy" and delivering several keynote lec-

tures which gave a detailed insight into the changing role of the service. Her time marked a watershed in its history, introducing a new degree of openness which brought the division out of the Cold War and firmly into the Nineties.

The first female in the post, and the first Director-General to be publicly named, she maintained a high profile, including appearances at the Oxford Union.

Writing recently in *The Times*, she said that life as head of MI5 frequently involved "dashing in for a trolley-load of convenience food on your way home from work". She has been enjoying her new freedom

outside "the ring of secrecy", with the pleasures of normal life, including the joys of using her free bus pass to travel around London.

In July, Dame Stella received a job offer from Channel 4 to front a game show with former Soviet double agent Oleg Gordievsky. But she made it clear to friends that she wanted a responsible and stimulating part-time job. She had hoped to become Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and was interviewed for the post. Although she greatly impressed the college, there was already a strong internal candidate and she was turned down.

M&S said it would not comment

on the circumstances of her recruitment because "that is not something we would talk about outside". Her appointment was among a series of boardroom changes after several directors decided to retire. Nigel Colne, executive director of the company's international group, will leave next March after 37 years. The corporate affairs executive director David Sieff is taking up a non-executive position.

Dame Stella will start her new job on January 1. A spokeswoman for the store chain said that her salary would be published in the company's annual report next year. At MI5 she earned about £90,000 a year.

Schoolgirl snubs Labour candidate in abortion clash

APROSPECTIVE Labour MP has become embroiled in an anti-abortion row at a Roman Catholic school in the constituency she will contest at the general election. A 14-year-old girl boycotted a prizegiving ceremony last night because she was due to receive her award from Barbara Follett, who describes herself as pro-choice on abortion.

The girl's mother said that her daughter was asked to leave the comprehensive school because she refused to accept the junior school award for modern languages from Mrs. Follett, wife of the millionaire novelist Ken Follett, who describes himself as pro-choice on abortion.

About 20 parents with anti-abortion placards picked up John Henry Newman Roman Catholic School in Stevenage, Hertfordshire, last night as Mrs. Follett and hundreds of other parents arrived. Earlier some of the parents had been escorted off the school premises by police.

One placard read: "Follett's folly - Emily's List". Mrs. Follett, a former "image maker" to the Labour Party, founded Emily's List which raises

money for women wishing to stand as Labour candidates. Women who are sponsored must sign a declaration that they will be pro-choice in line with the 1992 Labour election manifesto.

The schoolgirl, Emilia Klepacka, said: "My conscience would not allow me to accept the prize from someone who is anti-life in the things she has done and proposes to do and who discriminates against Catholics who wish to become MPs." She said that her classmates were giving her moral support. Emilia is backed by her mother Kings, a Polish Catholic.

Mrs. Klepacka and her husband Stanislaw, an architect, pray outside abortion clinics and offer help to patients. She said: "The school is endorsing a woman who has founded an organisation to provide career opportunities in the culture of death."

"Her organisation is ensuring that only women who support pro-abortion legislation are elected as Labour MPs, which rules out girls from Roman Catholic schools unless they are prepared to go against their consciences and their Church," Mrs. Klepacka

said she had been in dispute with the school for several years over sex education and contraception advice given outside the context of chastity and marriage.

In an interview with BBC Three Counties Radio yesterday, Mrs. Follett said: "I am terribly sorry that the girl's mother has taken this stand. I believe that she's a brilliant pupil and she does deserve her prize. I would very much like to give it to her because I approve of women who achieve."

"I'm anti-abortion but I do believe that the choice has to be down to the individual. With Emily's List, the ones who we support are pro-choice. They are not pro-abortion. I am sorry that this very personal issue has been made into a political one by the mother."

"We have no discrimination against Catholic women. Part of my family is Catholic. I have deep respect for Catholicism and that is why I am coming to the school. We have Roman Catholic women on Emily's List who are pro-choice."

A statement issued by the school said that it respected the reasons Emilia had given for not accepting the award. It went on: "Emilia is a good pupil and there is no question of her being asked to leave the school, as is alleged."

"It is our practice to invite public figures, both clergy and lay, to present awards. Mrs. Follett has been helpful to the school in organising work-experience for a student and in supporting a project in Uganda which is sponsored by our pupils."

The school is not aware that she is in favour of abortion. The governors' policy and the school's teaching is fully in accordance with the Roman Catholic Church's teaching on these matters."



Emilia Klepacka refused to accept a prize from Barbara Follett at a Catholic school last night



Roisin McAliskey, who is 4½ months pregnant, arriving at court yesterday. She was remanded in custody at Holloway prison for a week

BY RUSSELL JENKINS

THE elder daughter of Bernadette McAliskey, the former nationalist MP, is at risk of serious complications with her pregnancy while she awaits extradition to Germany on IRA bomb charges, a court was told yesterday.

Roisin McAliskey, 25, looked pale as she walked into Bow Street Magistrates' Court in London but was able to wink and wave to supporters in the public gallery, including her sister Deirdre, 21. She was remanded in

Pregnant McAliskey 'faces health risk in jail'

custody for a week after the five-minute hearing.

Ronald Barrie, the stipendiary magistrate, was told that the German authorities were preparing charges of attempted murder arising from a mortar bomb attack on a British Army

base in Osnabrück. Miss McAliskey's solicitor, Gareth Peirce, did not request bail but said that a full application would be made at the next hearing. Miss McAliskey was 4½ months pregnant, she said. "There is considerable concern about her health," Mrs. Peirce added. "Through me, she would like to say she is innocent of the offences."

Miss McAliskey, a graduate of Queen's University, Belfast, was arrested by the RUC at her parents' home in Co. Tyrone last Wednesday. She will be held at Holloway prison.

The German authorities are seeking to extradite a second person in connection with the attack in June. James Corry, 28, of Belfast, was remanded in custody in Dublin yesterday after being arrested on Tuesday.

Film exposes council chief as litter bug

A VILLAGE store owner who set up a hidden video camera to trap the person dumping rubbish on his doorstep found that the offender was the chairman of the parish council. Jim Mitchell, owner of the village shop next door, was filmed dropping piles of litter four times over six weeks, a court was told.

Ivan Prentice, 52, and his brother Austin, 49, who run the Londis store in Carlton Colville, near Lowestoft, Suffolk, handed the videotape evidence to the police. Mitchell, 50, who is also an independent Suffolk county councillor and school governor, appeared before Lowestoft magistrates on Tuesday. He admitted four charges of depositing litter, was fined £150 and ordered to pay £30 costs.

The court was told that he had dumped rubbish deliberately because he was fed up about the Prentice brothers serving youths he had banned from his shop for unruly behaviour. Jane Cox, defending, said: "He agrees that he was somewhat childish, but he returned the litter to where it had come from."

Tailback led to farmer's fine

A FARMER was fined for inconsiderate driving yesterday after trundling along in his combine harvester for nearly two miles at 10mph with a "very long queue" of angry drivers behind him.

When Stephen Leigh, 33, drove past a lay-by instead of pulling in and letting the drivers pass, one took down his registration number, reporting him to police when he finally turned into a field.

Mr. Leigh, 33, of Doulting, Somerset, was being travelling between two farms owned by his boss, Reg Keevil. The court clerk, Len Allen, told magistrates in Wells that it was an "unusual" offence.

"Mr. Leigh was driving a combine harvester at 11am on the A361 from Frome towards Shepton Mallet. The A361 is a single carriageway separated by a central system. The combine was travelling at about ten miles an hour.

"It would have been dangerous for any of the following traffic to attempt to overtake. He drove for one and a half miles without stopping to allow a very long queue of traffic behind him to overtake. He could have used lay-bys to allow the traffic to get by."

Mr. Leigh, who admitted the charge, was yesterday fined £120, ordered to pay £300 costs, and had his licence endorsed with three penalty points.

Mr. Keevil said afterwards: "Stephen was acting on my instructions. He had to get from A to B on the road. He didn't use the lay-by when he could have done."

An RAC spokesman said: "We have never come across a case like this before. Most farmers are fairly considerate and will pull over a tractor or combine harvester if there is a big tailback. But this ruling sends out a clear message to any inconsiderate drivers of agricultural vehicles."

First across the Channel

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A GREEK shipping agent told a jury yesterday how he feared he would suffocate or die from a heart attack after he was kidnapped at gunpoint and "stuffed" into the boot of a car.

George Fraghistas, 43, broke down briefly in the witness box at the Old Bailey when shown a black-and-white photograph of himself taken by his one of his captors — who demanded a £5 million ransom — as they launched their kidnap on a Sunday evening in a London car park.

Describing his nine-day ordeal of sensory deprivation in a cupboard where he was imprisoned, he said: "I was completely disorientated, scared, you know the feeling."

Mr. Fraghistas, who spent most of his time in captivity in a mask, his hands and legs bound, and his ears plugged, said: "The worst thing is one moment you get some hope, you think something not disastrous might happen, and the other moment, you think the worst will happen. It takes some days to get to terms with

Kidnapped shipping agent feared he would suffocate

BY MICHAEL HORSNELL

Three days to get used to this. The fourth day things got better."

He recounted a chilling conversation with one of his captors: "He asked me if I was going to co-operate and I said I had no other choice. He made it clear that if the police became involved or if they were not successful they would have to kill me by injection. That is painless, they said. He said he would use a gun if that was what I wanted."

The four men who allegedly abducted him told him at one stage that they worked for "an organisation" which needed his money. They reduced their demand to \$3m (£1.8 million) after several days of discussion, but Mr. Fraghistas said he "got the feeling at the time that it was non-negotiable." "He was warned that if he did not co-operate or if he accidentally caught sight of his kidnappers, he would have to be killed."

Two Greeks — Constantine Korkolis, 39, and Thanassis Zografos, 24 — and two Frenchmen, Jean-Marc Mereu, 36, and Djemel Moussaoui, 33 — have denied kidnapping, false imprisonment, and blackmail.

Mr. Fraghistas, who comes from a wealthy shipping family, said he was kidnapped after parking his car at an NCP car park in Maida Vale, west London. He was driving home from the offices of his company, World Carrier (London) Ltd.

One of his worst moments was when he was allowed a shower four days after his abduction. He said: "I was very scared because, the night before, I overheard the French people saying that at 6pm they would 'do it nicely'. I was carried into the bathroom. They put a tape over my eyes. I was told to kneel. I thought it was the end. But nothing happened."

The case continues on Friday.

Boxes at Lord's on sale for £375,000

BY BILL FROST

CRICKET lovers marooned without hope at the bottom of the MCC waiting list are being offered private boxes at Lord's — providing that they have £375,000 to spare.

With access to Test matches, one-day finals, university games and the Cricket World Cup, the rent has been set at "competitive rates" of between £40,000 and £65,000 a year. However, the contract is for a five-year term and the tenant must also make a £50,000 interest-free loan to the club.

Benefits include up to 16 free tickets for each day the box is used. Lord's is notoriously choosy, but the MCC also needs money to help build the New Grand Stand.

Gavin Brent, of Humberts Leisure, the company in charge of renting, said: "The club will still have the right to reject applications. There is no danger of the wrong sort of person being allowed to rent a box simply because he has money."

Author grabs fame by the love handles

BY DALYA ALBERGE ARTS CORRESPONDENT

A LITERARY virgin was happy to accept an award for his first book yesterday, even though it was for writing the worst sexual episode to have been published in a novel during the past year.

David Huggins, 37, follows in good company by winning the Bad Sex in Fiction prize from *The Literary Review*. Previous recipients include Melvyn Bragg and runners-up included Salman Rushdie and Doris Lessing. The editor of the *Review*, Auberon Waugh, established the prize four years ago. He said that novelists, like teenagers, were being pressurised into sex: "It is a national disgrace that nearly every novelist feels he has to include a passage of sexual description, however awkward, perfunctory or embarrassing for all concerned."

Passages from Mr. Huggins's *The Big Kiss*, which he describes as a "dark, urban tale", included: "She grabbed my love handles, her eyes black saucers staring into mine as she hooked a yoga-leg onto my shoulder. We went through a medley of our favourite positions." The rest is unprintable.

Mr. Huggins, an illustrator, said he wrote his story in a weekend. Accepting £250 and a statuette inspired by the theme of the prize, he said: "I am delighted and honoured. I've lived for this day all my life." Commenting on the winning passage, he said: "The book is meant to be a black comedy. I thought it was funny. There is no sex until halfway through."

A spokeswoman for his publishers, Picador, said: "We are thrilled that David Huggins is up there with the greats."

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* By "a Federal Europe" it is meant a European Union with supranational political institutions, including The European Parliament, The European Commission, and The European Court of Justice, and in which every nation must apply European Law, and which would bring about Economic and Monetary Union.

† A common trading market would allow the free movement of goods, services, labour and capital, whilst limiting the power of the Community institutions exclusively to ensuring that that marketplace would be efficient, competitive and fair.

N.B. The precise wording of the question to be put to the electorate and the conditions necessary to obtain a fair debate and vote should be established by Parliament.

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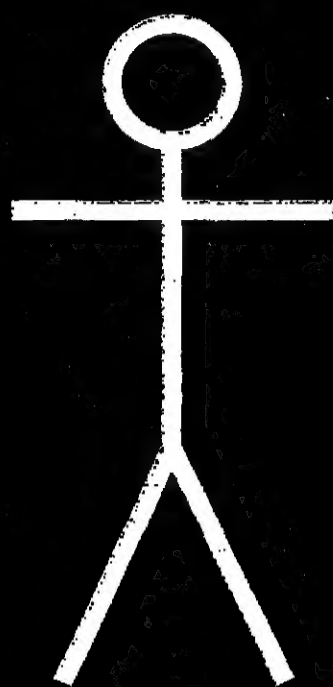


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Tunnel executive Robert Malpas outlining safety plans yesterday behind Patrick Ponsolle, left, and Christian Costa

Tunnel may reopen for passengers next week

FROM BEN MACINTYRE
IN PARIS

CAR and passenger services through the Channel Tunnel may restart next week if safety regulators give permission, Eurotunnel said yesterday.

Patrick Ponsolle, the company's French co-president, said that additional security plans had been presented to the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority, ensuring the highest safety standards if services resumed.

The plans include keeping two fire engines and an ambulance on permanent standby in the service tunnel and two emergency trains with full crews at each end, able to reach the middle of the tunnel in less than 20 minutes. "We

would not be asking to resume passenger services unless we were totally confident about the safety of human life, which is our absolute priority. The tunnel is as safe as - if not safer than - any other method of travelling across the Channel," M Ponsolle said.

The tunnel was closed after a fire on a freight train ten days ago. M Ponsolle said he hoped that the safety authority would allow passenger and car trains to resume "in the first days of next week". He added, however, that a full service would "have to wait until the necessary repairs are completed". Some freight shipments restarted last week. Eurotunnel proposes to have three passenger trains a day running in each direction

next week, gradually increasing to six in each direction. Before the fire there were 12 passenger services daily in each direction.

Trains will be able to avoid the fire-damaged section of tunnel by moving to the other parallel tunnel at a crossover point. It is estimated that the repairs will take up to five months and cost up to £62.5 million.

The Anglo-French safety authority is expected to rule on whether to permit the resumption of passenger traffic in the next few days.

M Ponsolle said that the desire for a speedy resumption of services was not a result of financial pressure. Eurotunnel's net losses resulting from the fire, estimated at up

to £7 million, would be met by the company's insurers, as would any compensation claims, he said. "The closure has caused massive disruption to our clients... we believe the tunnel has become an essential service and we hope to reinstate it as quickly as possible in the public interest."

A fire broke out in the tunnel yesterday at the same spot as last week's blaze. It is believed to have been started when sparks from welding work ignited material on the remains of the wagon involved in the first fire.

The fire was understood to have been put out by Eurotunnel staff already at the scene. "It was very minor and was put out almost immediately," Kent police said.

Errant clergy to be examined in secret

BY RUTH GLEDHILL
RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

THE Church of England last night agreed to abolish its 900-year-old consistory courts and to bring in a less cumbersome system for disciplining errant clergy.

While consistory courts will continue to hear the cases of churches seeking permission to alter their buildings, any cleric accused of adultery or other conduct considered "unbecoming" will in future appear before closed tribunals.

The tribunals will make it less costly and less time-consuming to bring clergy to justice. The General Synod agreed to set up disciplinary tribunals to examine clergy behind closed doors, although agreeing that findings should be made public.

The Church wants to avoid a repetition of trials such as that last summer of the Dean of Lincoln, Dr Brandon Jackson, who was acquitted of misconduct with a cathedral verger after a lengthy and highly publicised trial in Lincoln. Canon Alan Hawker,

An Anglican guide, *Church and State*, which says that the law banning monarchs from marrying Roman Catholics is "outdated and inappropriate" to most people, was revised yesterday, just days before the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, is due to visit the Pope in Rome in an attempt to bring the Catholic and Anglican Churches closer together.

chairman of the working party that drew up the proposals, said: "The existing disciplinary procedures in our Church of England are seriously unsatisfactory."

The Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure of 1963, under which accused clergy were tried, had been used only three times, and was difficult to understand and slow. Rather than invoke this measure, "there is ample evidence that bishops prefer to grit their teeth and tolerate indiscipline," said Canon Hawker.

He said the aim of holding tribunals in secret was not to avoid washing the Church's dirty linen in public, but was to ensure a calm and fair hearing.

"Transparency must not be confused with observability," he said. "A cleric must be deemed innocent until guilt is responsibly established," he said.

Sir John Owen, a High Court judge and Dean of the Arches, the Church's two courts of appeal, said: "Adultery by an accountant, engineer or newspaper magnate does not attract attention. But let it be a Member of Parliament, let it be a doctor, let it be a cleric and we see the very worst of press prurience."

He said that Anglican disciplinary procedures were the subject of mockery. "That is not what happens in other churches. That is not what happens with other professions."

John Porter, of Hull, said: "In large organisations, including the Church of England, there is a long history of complaints being brushed aside."

But the Right Rev Alec Graham, the Bishop of Newcastle, gave warning against the proposals. "Parishes and the Church at large need to be effectively protected and delivered from some few members of the clergy," he said. "Some of the clergy need to be protected against their parishioners."

He said that the tribunal system might open the door for some parishioners to persecute their clergy. "From time to time, parishioners have it in for their clergy. It does happen that members of a congregation get their knives into clergy and twist them. On occasions they can be implacable and relentless in pursuit. On such occasions, bishops try to protect their clergy."

However, a last-minute amendment proposed by the Rev Michael Vasey, a lecturer at St John's theological college, Durham, gave bishops the power to block hearings that they considered to be inappropriate or malicious. Giving warning of the risk that campaigns could be started against individuals, Mr Vasey said: "Without my amendment, it would allow someone with a computer to take to law every gay priest who has a partner and every evangelical who departs from the lectionary."

Leading article, page 23

40 arrested in hunt for duty cheats

Customs officers raided 100 addresses across England yesterday in a crackdown on suspected fraud on alcohol and tobacco duty thought to be worth £65 million.

More than 40 people were arrested and supplies were seized as the operation went ahead in Yorkshire, Cheshire, Essex, Suffolk, Hertfordshire, Hereford, the Midlands, northwest London and Dorset. Investigators also examined businesses in France.

Boys charged

Two 14-year-old boys from Hook, Hampshire, have been charged with criminal damage endangering life after Simon Willmott, 22, was seriously injured when a piece of concrete fell on to his car from a bridge over the M3.

Three remanded

Three men arrested after a police released an alleged kidnap victim from a hotel room in north London appeared before Liverpool magistrates on blackmail charges. They were remanded in custody until December 4.

Roadside surgery

A doctor performed a two-hour roadside operation to remove two 3ft wooden gateposts imbedded in a driver's thighs. Douglas Bell, 52, had lost control of his car and crashed through a fence at Welford, Berkshire.

Dr Zhivago sale

The love letters from Boris Pasternak to the woman who inspired him to write *Dr Zhivago* have failed to sell at auction. The letters to his mistress, Olga Ivinskaya, were expected to fetch £500,000.

Pumping icon

A 1923 petrol pump at Turnstone, Worcestershire, said to be the oldest still working in Britain, has won a reprieve after a 1,000-name petition helped to persuade the Environment Department that it did not breach safety laws.

Post haste

December 11 is the last posting day for letters to Santa Claus, the Royal Mail said. They should be stamped, addressed to Santa Claus, Reindeerland, SAN TA!, and include the sender's name and address for a reply.

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TV reopens Hillsborough dispute

New witness claims footage on video contradicted police

By BILL FROST

FAMILIES of the 96 football supporters who died at Hillsborough are to seek legal advice after seeing the preview of a drama-documentary which claims to have unearthed new evidence about the disaster.

The fans were crushed in pens on the terraces at Sheffield Wednesday's ground when Liverpool met Nottingham Forest for the FA Cup semi-final in April 1989. Granada Television, the maker of Hillsborough, said yesterday that a sworn affidavit from a "new witness" contradicted police accounts.

Roger Houldsworth, a video technician on duty at the ground, claims that he saw images from a camera trained on the stands where Liverpool supporters were crushed to death. "It showed me views which ought to have been available to officers in the police control box," he said. "It was obvious to me that the pens were already full when they decided to let another 2,000 people in. I can't understand why the police couldn't see the same thing."

Mr Houldsworth's account features in the Granada programme, written by Jimmy McGovern, the creator of Cracker. It will be broadcast on ITV a week today.

Footage from the video cam-

era at the time the fatal decision was made to open a gate leading to the already overcrowded central pens disappeared before the subsequent damning inquiry report by Lord Justice Taylor and the inquest on the victims. Police told the 80-day hearing, which returned a verdict of accidental death, that the camera was not working properly and was little used on the day.

However, Mr Houldsworth said that he had repaired the fault that morning. "Everything was working perfectly. It had to be before a major semi-final," he said in a statement yesterday.

Mr Houldsworth, who was interviewed by investigating officers at the time, said that he was surprised not to be called to give evidence at either Lord Justice Taylor's inquiry or the inquest.

Families of the victims, furious that the inquest did not return a verdict of manslaughter, described the new evidence as "a breakthrough". Trevor Hicks, chairman of the Hillsborough Families Support Group, who lost his two teenage daughters, Victoria and Sarah, in the tragedy, said: "We will be looking at this with our lawyers and what we do about it will depend on the advice we receive. It's to the credit of the



The cast of Hillsborough. The programme recreates missing footage from a video camera trained on the stands

research team that this evidence has emerged."

Lord Justice Taylor said in his report that police who opened a gate to relieve crowd pressure outside the ground just before the match failed to block off a tunnel — a move which would have kept fans from the crowded central pens. "It was a blunder of the first magnitude," he said, adding that the police "froze" in the face of the crisis. No officer

was prosecuted or disciplined over the disaster. Chief Superintendent David Duckenfield, who was in charge at the ground on the day, retired on medical grounds. This ended disciplinary proceedings against him.

South Yorkshire Police and the Coroner's Office concerned declined to participate in research for the programme. A police spokeswoman said that there would be no

comment on Hillsborough until the programme had been broadcast. "We take the view that this is just opening up old wounds and upsetting the families."

Ian McBride, one of the programme's executive producers, denied that it blurred the line between drama and documentary formats. "No one would say that officers seeing what was happening in the pens would then willfully

open up a gate and allow 2,000 people to stream into the ground. However, I do think that police on the day had become preoccupied with crowd problems outside the ground. I think this [Mr Houldsworth's account] is a piece of evidence which, if it had been placed before the inquest jury, might well have had an impact on their deliberations and produced a different verdict."

Ambulance chief uses staff to sell book

By PAUL WILKINSON

AN AMBULANCE trust under investigation over allegations that it is failing patients has been asking staff to sell a book written by one of its senior executives.

Five uniformed senior officers from the North Yorkshire NHS Ambulance Trust are calling at booksellers in the county seeking orders for *Accidents Will Happen*, by Murray Naylor, the trust chairman. None of the £3.95 price will go to the trust.

Mr Naylor, 58, describes in the paperback the experiences of paramedics called to emergencies throughout North Yorkshire since 1990. Nigel Metcalfe, the trust spokesman, said: "We see it as a promotional tool for the service." He said that while "out and about on their normal duties" the officers were asked to go into shops to sell the books, if they had time.

The trust is the subject of an independent inquiry after the Channel 4 programme *Dispatches* claimed that at least two people had died as a result of equipment failures or ambulances getting lost. Other allegations included failure to train paramedics adequately. The trust has rejected the claims, except that of poor training, and has complained to the Broadcasting Complaints Commission.

Mr Taylor said using officers to promote the book "in no way whatsoever interfered in their duty of saving lives or managing their groups".

SATURDAY IN THE TIMES



THE ORIGINAL MR BRITPOP
Robert Crampton meets Cliff Richard in the Magazine



HAVING A BALL
Quentin Letts on the Diana effect at America's party of the year in Weekend

PLUS
SEVEN-DAY TV AND RADIO GUIDE in The Directory

Restrictions on emergency surgery 'put lives at risk'

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

TWO out of three NHS hospitals are putting lives at risk by having no operating theatre set aside for dealing with emergencies during the day, a report has shown.

The lack of facilities for emergency surgery means seriously ill patients have to wait until the evening, when they are more likely to be operated on by junior staff, the report into deaths after surgery says.

In addition, too many elderly patients in no condition for operations are dying after undergoing surgery for broken hips when it would be kinder to give them pain-killing drugs and to allow nature to take its course, the authors say.

The report, the most comprehensive study of the risks of surgery, is based on 20,000 deaths occurring within 30 days of an operation from April 1993 to March 1994 that

were notified to the National Confidential Inquiry into Perioperative Deaths.

Professor John Blandy, chairman of the inquiry, said the number of deaths must be balanced against the 3.5 million operations performed each year. The vast majority occurred in elderly patients, already desperately ill. The overall message is that surgery is safe and getting safer. There has been a quite noticeable improvement since we started these reports in 1987.

However, hospitals remained short of emergency operating theatres, recovery rooms, and high dependency units that are essential to guarantee patient safety. Ron Hoile, of the Royal College of Surgeons, a co-ordinator of the inquiry, said: "Most NHS trusts are using their facilities to the full for elective (non-emergency) work. Apart from dire emergencies, which will al-

ways be made room for, a lot of emergency cases are kept waiting until evening.

"We recommend all hospitals have an emergency operating theatre staffed round the clock. An empty theatre is not an idle theatre, it is to treat emergencies as they arise."

More than 400 of the cases analysed involved elderly people with a broken thighbone, a condition that is increasing as the population ages. The report cites ten cases in which its advisers "doubted the wisdom of the decision to operate". In every case the patient died immediately or within a few days.

"There is an unwritten, possibly unsubstantiated, doctrine that every patient should be operated upon to achieve pain relief and ease nursing care. This deserves to be reconsidered in the light of modern methods of pain relief," the report says.

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Killer nurse's hospital pays parents £500,000

By Russell Jenkins

FAMILIES of the victims of the child murderer Beverly Allitt have agreed a total compensation of £500,000 for their stress in a ground-breaking legal deal.

The award, made as compensation for post-traumatic stress disorder, is being viewed by the families as the first of its kind because they were not present when the crimes were perpetrated. It was agreed out of court between Lincolnshire Health Authority, which employed Allitt as a nurse, and the parents' solicitor.

Allitt, 27, was convicted three and a half years ago and is serving 13 life sentences in Rampton top-security hospital, Nottinghamshire, for murdering four children and injuring nine others at Grantham and Kesteven General Hospital.

Her youngest victim was only eight weeks old. The families claimed compensation for the nightmares and flashbacks they suffered as a result of the anguish caused by Allitt's crimes.

The money will be divided

between the 12 families of the 13 children who were killed or injured by the nurse who was dubbed, at the time of her conviction at Nottingham Crown Court, the "Angel of Death". The health authority, which was once accused by the parents of emotional blackmail, originally argued that the law did not allow parents compensation for the psychiatric effects unless they were close by when the crimes took place.

The settlement was reached



Allitt: murdered four children and hurt nine

under the threat of long and expensive court proceedings. The authority had argued that court claims would raise difficult points of law and "require a great deal of time and expense, much of which will be from the public purse".

The parents refused to accept the authority's suggestions on how to share out the total, which was originally offered in May. Under the new terms, it is left to the families to decide.

Kevin Holder, Lincolnshire Health Authority's director of corporate services, said yesterday: "We recognise that no amount of money will remove the anguish and stress suffered by the families. But these settlements will at least negate the need to relive the events during legal proceedings. We hope the conclusion of this chapter in the tragic events of five years ago will go some way to allowing the families to put the events, as best they can, behind them."

Paul Balen, the solicitor who negotiated the settlement, refused to disclose how the £500,000 would be divided among the families or the highest and lowest figures that

would be allocated. "It is an entirely confidential settlement," said Mr Balen, of the Nottingham firm Freeth Cartwright Hunt Dickinson.

"Not even the parents know what others have received. They have only been told of the figure they are to receive as individuals. The money has been divided strictly according to the quality of medical evidence that records the level of stress they have been through."

He said it was a "ground-breaking settlement" which leaves the parents with some form of recompense and ends five years of litigation. "The settlement will avoid any more unnecessary stress for them. Their feelings today are ones of relief." The families had been prepared to take their cases to the House of Lords and to create new law if necessary to gain compensation for their suffering, he added.

Allitt's surviving victims and the estates of the children she murdered have received interim payments and "substantial settlements" after bringing their own compensation claims.



Blood, Sweat and Tears is Margaret Thatcher's favourite portrait of Churchill

Churchill portrait sold for £150,000

By John Shaw

ONE of the few portraits of Churchill painted during the war was sold for £150,000 at Sotheby's in London yesterday. The amount was double the estimate.

The picture, known as *Blood, Sweat and Tears* after Churchill's famous speech at the time of Dunkirk, had hung in 10 Downing Street since Margaret Thatcher was elected in 1979. It was her favourite portrait of him.

The portrait, dated 1943, was sold on behalf of the St Stephen's Constitutional Club, which commissioned it from Frank O. Salisbury (1874-1962). He studied the wartime leader in the House of Lords, where MPs sat after their chamber was destroyed in an air raid in May 1941.

It went to a private buyer from abroad. The club, whose membership includes a number of MPs, will use the money to refurbish its premises in Westminster. David Bright, the chairman, said that the club was sad to be losing one of its most treasured possessions.

Wallflowers come out of the kitchen

By Joanna Bale

THE traditional housewife is almost extinct, according to a survey which reveals that nearly nine out of ten women do not think the term describes them.

The shrinking violet has also withered, with 90 per cent of women saying that it was acceptable to make the first move towards a sexual relationship if they were attracted to a man. But men have become less important to women, with only 30 per cent saying that having a man in their lives was "very important", and only 20 per cent regarding marriage as "important". More women (32 per cent) dreamt of having someone to help them with domestic chores than about meeting their dream man (28 per cent). The survey, carried out by

National Opinion Polls for Grey, the London advertising agency, spoke to 220 women aged 15 to 45. It also found that the days of the aspiring Superwoman, with the emphasis on striving for perfection in both career and family life, were over.

Fewer women (42 per cent) dreamt of losing weight than about having enough time to do all they things they wanted (55 per cent), having a wardrobe full of beautiful clothes (62 per cent), or of travelling more frequently (57 per cent).

The top role model was Mother Teresa, followed by Tina Turner, Oprah Winfrey, Joanna Lumley and Dawn French. Bottom of the list were Pamela Anderson, Paula Yates, Madonna and Baroness Thatcher.



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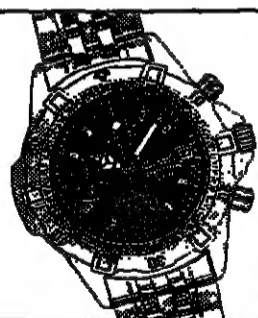
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Royals under fire for letting young Prince shoot stag

By Alan Hamilton

CAMPAIGNERS against field sports reacted swiftly yesterday to the news that Prince William had shot his first stag at the age of 14.

The Prince, accompanied by his father, the Prince of Wales, and his younger brother, Prince Harry, made the kill on the Balmoral estate last month shortly before the legal end of the stag-shooting season, on October 20. St James's Palace declined to be drawn into the debate yesterday, but it is understood that the young Prince was spared the ritual of having his face smeared with the blood of his first kill.

Deer-culling is an essential element of estate management in the Scottish Highlands, which has suffered from an overpopulation of the species since the demise of its natural predator, the wolf. But the Royal Family's continuing affection for country sports involving guns still enrages opponents of field sports.

Kevin Saunders, of the League Against Cruel Sports, said that his organisation accepted the need for properly managed deer-culling: "Deer should be shot by a marksman using a high-powered rifle, not by a 14-year-old after trophies. We despair of the Royal Family, who exhibit the morals of brutalists and set a dreadful example at a time when society is moving away from the gun culture." The league says that the Highlands suffer from mismanagement of the deer population, with trophy-



Prince William made his first kill last month.

seeking sportsmen shooting only stags for their antlers and ignoring hinds.

However, Janet George, a spokeswoman for the British Fields Sports Society, said that a 14-year-old would not be allowed to shoot a stag without great preparation. "He had a qualified professional stalker with him, he has had a great deal of practice in shooting and at his age he will have taken it far more seriously than an older teenager, who would probably have done it only for the bangs and thrills."

The society approves of sportsmen culling deer: "Without the amateur sportsman, no one could afford to manage deer herds properly. Professional stalkers are expensive; the sportsman does much of the work free of charge. It is in no way careless killing. The amateur takes great pride in the clean kill." Stalking experts are divided on whether too many stags are

killed in comparison with hinds, but they agree that the culling of female deer, permitted between mid-October and mid-February, often offers a poor yield, because bad weather keeps stalkers off the hills.

Prince William, like his father, has been used to a gun since the age of eight, accompanying his family on pleasant shoots at Sandringham in continuation of a long family tradition that began with Edward VII. Stag-shooting at Balmoral was much favoured by Prince Albert and fully endorsed by Queen Victoria. The royal tradition of deer-hunting extends through William the Conqueror to the Saxon kings.

The Prince of Wales is an unashamed champion of field sports. Since his separation from Diana, Princess of Wales — who does not share his views — he has made sure that their two children have had regular hunting and shooting holidays at Balmoral.



Colin Edwards, of Ecclesfield, Yorkshire, greets Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother at the Royal Smithfield Show in Earls Court, west London, yesterday. The Queen Mother is president of the show and a regular visitor. She was welcomed with applause and cheers as she toured, amid tight security, with the

Queen Mother's walkabout

Duchess of Devonshire, who is vice-president. At 96, the Queen Mother needed to lean on a walking stick, but seemed to be in good health. One of her own herd of Aberdeen Angus cattle — a heifer named Castle of Mey

Eyebright 28th — won second prize in its class. After inspecting the winning cattle, the Queen Mother had a lunch of British beef. A show spokesman said: "Her Majesty thoroughly enjoyed her visit and her lunch — which

was beef from the Duke of Buccleuch's estates." Earlier this year, she handed over her home and her 2,000-acre private estate at the Castle of Mey, on the far north coast of Scotland, and its prize-winning Aberdeen Angus herd to a charitable trust to help to ensure the future of a highly successful venture into cattle breeding.

Aspinall keepers let back into tiger pens

By a Staff Reporter

THE zoo owner John Aspinall won a High Court battle yesterday for the right to let his keepers enter the enclosures of freely roaming tigers.

Canterbury City Council failed to obtain a ruling to ensure, in the interests of safety, that staff entered enclosures at Howlets, Kent, only with tigers that were "very young or immobilised". The council had challenged an industrial tribunal decision in January to lift the council's ban on the practice, encouraged by Mr Aspinall, of allowing animals and keepers to "bond". The ban followed the death of a keeper, Trevor Smith, in 1994 after he was bitten by a tiger while cleaning its enclosure. He was the third Aspinall keeper to be killed by tigers.

Canterbury's senior environmental health officer, Rich-

ard Langridge, had argued in court that the bonding practice was a breach of the provisions of the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act and a European Union directive. He contended that there was no need for employees to be put at risk.

Mr Justice Turner said yesterday that it was inconceivable that the directive or the Act "can have intended to outlaw activities merely on the basis that they were dangerous". He added: "The Act is not seeking to legislate as to what work could or could not be performed, but is concerned with the manner of its doing." He held that bonding could not be achieved unless the practice was followed.

The council was refused leave to appeal, but might ask the Court of Appeal to consider the case.



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Last spring the Canadian Government subsidised the killing of 268,921 seals, a barbaric act and the biggest mass slaughter of marine mammals in the world today. About 75% of the seals killed were babies, clubbed to death or shot. Some escaped, fatally wounded, to die a slow and agonising death beneath the ice. Help IFAW to stop this appalling cruelty. S.O.S. Sign On for Seals — add your name to IFAW's campaign against cruelty and receive an information pack. Ring FREEPHONE 0500 18 18 18 and find out how you can help.



10 POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

Spending squeeze to put council tax up by 6 per cent

By Jill Sherman and Ian Murray

COUNCIL taxes are likely to rise by at least 6 per cent next year after an even tighter squeeze on local government spending than last year.

Town hall leaders have given warning of widespread cuts in services. They had asked John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, for an extra £2.3 billion to maintain services at their present level, but for the third year running he obtained less than half that amount, £1.1 billion.

Mr Gummer announced that total council spending could rise by only 2.5 per cent or £45.6 billion, compared with a rise of 3.2 per cent this year. He also disclosed that government grants towards this would be only £37.7

billion, a 1.5 per cent rise. This compared to £35.23 billion for this year, which represented a 2.5 per cent rise.

The Government's own figures in its Budget Red Book suggest that council taxes will rise by 8 per cent, although officials said this figure was over-optimistic. Last year the same figure was calculated at 7 per cent although actual rises averaged 6 per cent.

In a statement on the settlement in the Commons Mr Gummer insisted that he could not confirm any figures, because the actual rates would be set by each local authority, most of which were now under Labour or Liberal Democrat control.

He also emphasised that the

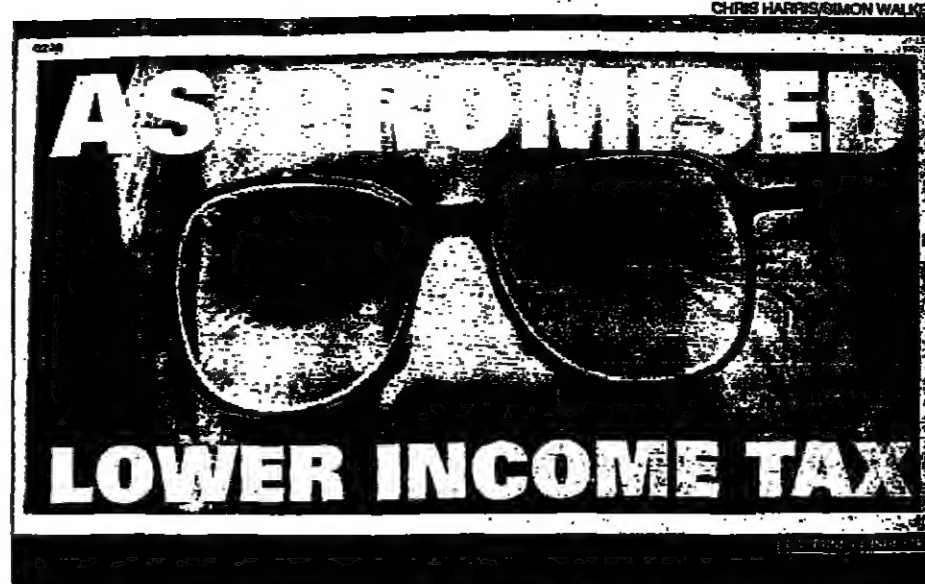
total figure, £45.66 billion, represented a huge proportion of government spending and councils should be able to make efficiency savings. "It would be absurd to imagine that within this large total there is room for greater efficiency," Mr Gummer said. "I make no apology for the fact that we have pursued such efficiencies vigorously."

But Sir Jeremy Beecham, representing three local authority associations, said that the pursuit for efficiency was destroying services. The 2.5 per cent settlement would make it impossible to protect services.

Councils are already spending £2.5 billion more this year than the Government expects them to spend next. They are filling the gap by drawing on reserves but Sir Jeremy said these were not inexhaustible and in some authorities were reaching dangerously low levels.

The Government has earmarked an extra £630 million of the money authorities can spend on education, which is being increased by 3.6 per cent this year. Education authorities will be allowed to increase their budget above capping levels provided the money they spend goes on schools.

Authorities say they are already spending £41 more per child on education than



Post-haste party bosses wasted no time in putting their Budget message on the streets. The Tories invited voters to make eye contact with honest John Major, while John Prescott, below, presented Labour's view of the Government's grasping hands



the government allows and argue that, far from being an increase, the £630 million represents a £73 million cut on present education budgets.

Shire district authorities will be hit hardest by the settlement since they do not provide education services and will therefore receive no extra money for this. London boroughs will be given the highest average increase, which means they can not only spend more but will be able to increase council tax by higher

amounts than elsewhere in the country. Mr Gummer said that the increase represented a "balanced and reasonable response" to the conflict between council demands for more money and the need to control public spending.

But Mr Dobson said that the average council tax bill would rise by 6 per cent representing a £40 increase per household. "Local people will once again be forced to pay more and get less," he

claimed that that taxpayers would be forced to pay an extra £4 billion over the next three years — the equivalent of £200 for each family.

Mr Gummer said that he had listened to numerous representations from local government associations and had weighed the interests of local citizens in terms of both the services they had a right to expect and the taxes they had to bear.

Leading article, page 23

Rise will 'wipe out' Chancellor's 1p Budget offering

By Ian Murray, Community Correspondent

THE Chancellor's 1p cut in income tax will be no more than enough to cover the rise in council tax and service charges, Sir Jeremy Beecham, chairman of the Labour-dominated Local Government Association, said yesterday.

He said the £1.1 billion extra councils are to be allowed to spend was less than half the £2.3 billion needed to maintain services at present levels. Although he expected authorities would be able to make efficiency savings of £400 million in the year ahead, there was no way of squaring the circle between income and expenditure.

"The Government is guilty of sleight of hand, particularly in education," he said. "We are told we are getting an extra £630 million for education but that isn't enough to cope with the increase in the school population that is already in the pipeline and makes no allowance at all for a teachers' pay increase, which is historically always above the level of inflation."

Marion Williams of the National Confederation of Parent-Teacher Associations said that the settlement meant that parents were increasingly having to raise money to fund everything from teachers' salaries to playgrounds. The £50 million grant for school buildings was "nothing against the £3.2 billion needed over the next five years."

"There are 600 primary

schools with outside loos and at this moment 750,000 children are being taught in temporary buildings which are freezing in winter and boiling hot in summer," she said. "We know local authorities are squeezing all the other services for the sake of education, but there still isn't enough money to meet our basic needs."

Katrina Webster of Age Concern said the settlement meant that the 20 million pensioners who relied on local authority services would progressively find care being cut. "If we don't invest today, it is going to be bleak for the old people of the tomorrow, and that includes the politicians," she said.

Police force budgets will rise by £247 million next year with every force in England and Wales receiving at least a 2 per cent increase, according to figures issued yesterday. The Home Office said that no force would receive less than a 2 per cent increase. In total the police budget would rise by 3.7 per cent.

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, said the extra money showed the Government's commitment to law and order. He said that spending on the police, including central government services such as the National Criminal Intelligence Service and expenditure on capital projects such as buildings, would rise from £7.1 billion to £7.3 billion.

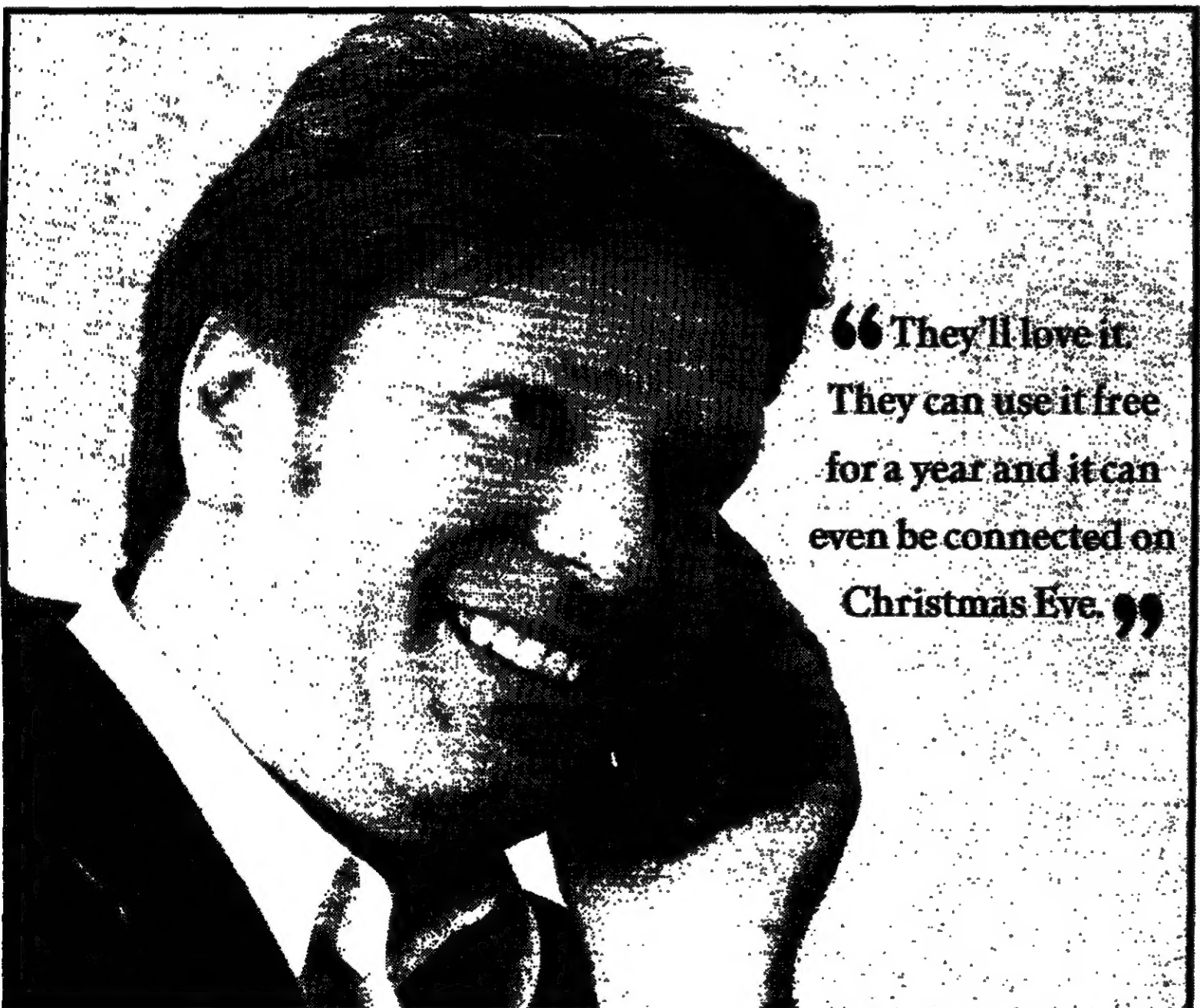
HIGHEST AND LOWEST

The average council tax on Band D dwellings in England and Wales this year is £636.60. The expected 6 per cent rise would add £38.20 to this, bringing the bill to £674.80.

In England average council taxes are highest in the North West, at £749.36 for a Band D dwelling, and lowest in East Anglia, at £593.13. London, the South East and South West are all below the

national average. The Midlands, North and Yorkshire are all above it. In Wales the average is £461.58.

Liverpool has the highest Band D council tax at £1,006.46. The lowest is Westminster at £295.10. The London Borough of Southwark put up council tax by 28 per cent this year, the largest rise of any authority in charge of all services.



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By-election delayed by wary Tories

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY

SENIOR Tories have delayed the Wirral South by-election until next year after warnings that a defeat next month could lead to important legislation being disrupted.

The Government's majority of one is expected to be wiped out next month when the Labour-held Barnsley East seat is contested. The Tories will then defend a vulnerable majority of 4,183 in Wirral South, which became vacant when Barry Porter died this month.

The decision to delay the contest until late January at least comes as Commons officials have warned that two by-election defeats next month could force the Government to give up control of committees that study the detail of Bills. However, if the Tories avoid slipping into a Commons minority until late January or February, they are expected to retain control of the committees until the general election.

Yesterday Labour named its candidate for Wirral South as Ben Chapman, 56, a businessman.

Goldsmith chooses his words for big question on Europe

By ANDREW PIERCE, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

SIR JAMES GOLDSMITH last night revealed the wording of the referendum question on the future of Europe that he wants to put to the British people.

The leader of the Referendum Party, who is challenging the former Tory minister David Mellor in Putney at the general election, made his long-awaited announcement in a speech at the Oxford Union.

Sir James makes clear, in a £225,000 newspaper advertising campaign today, his belief that the voters should have a straight choice between a federal Europe or a block of independent trading nations.

The announcement was deliberately timed to come 24 hours after the Budget — which the Referendum Party believes is effectively Britain's last before Europe assumes economic control — and only days before talks on the EU stability pact.

In the full-page advertisement The Referendum Party states: "The question the people must be allowed to answer. Do you want the United Kingdom to be part of

a federal Europe or do you want the United Kingdom to return to an association of sovereign nations that are part of a common trading market?" Sir Alan Walters, the former economics adviser to Baroness Thatcher, helped to draw up the question.

But the latest move from Sir James was attacked by David Heathcoat-Amory, who resigned as Paymaster General this year to campaign against a single currency. He said: "I think the Referendum Party position is vacuous and pathetic. It would deliver an ambiguous result because it is a loaded question."

"It merely seeks an expression of public support, which Sir James would then walk away from. It would not be binding on anyone."

However, sources close to the Tory Euro-sceptic John Redwood said that Sir James was on the right path. "He is following the advice given in a meeting with John Redwood in April. Do you want a common market or a common government," a Redwood supporter said.

The question includes an

explanation of Sir James's definition of a federal Europe as one that is answerable to the European Parliament, the European Commission, and the European Court of Justice: a Europe where nations must bow to European law.

By contrast the "common trading market" is defined as one that would allow the free movement of goods, services, labour and capital but limit the power of the institutions to ensuring a fair marketplace. The institutions would be restricted from entering into the political and judicial arena.

Last night Sir James also spelt out his proposals for a referendum campaign. He is seeking a vote before or on the same date of the general election. He supports equal access to television and radio for the "yes" and "no" campaigns.

But the chosen formula for the referendum question attracted a derisory response from the European Movement, which supports a single currency. Giles Radice, the chairman and Labour MP, said: "What the question really means is: 'do you want to



stay in or withdraw from Europe. No one is under any illusion. But the fact is Goldsmith is in trouble.

"Both Labour and the Conservatives are committed to a referendum if agreed Cabinet policy is in favour of a single

currency. That is the really big issue. There is no point in the Referendum Party."

The Referendum Party, which has named 350 candidates to fight the general election, has accelerated the selection procedure to ensure

that 600 are in place by Christmas.

A target of 400,000 party members has been set for the election. The figure stands at almost 80,000, an increase of 30,000 since the party's conference in Brighton last month.

Labour will cut fuel VAT to 5%

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

GORDON BROWN promised last night that if he becomes Chancellor he will cut VAT on heating bills from 8 per cent to 5 per cent in his first Budget.

The Shadow Chancellor used his Budget response television broadcast to the country to offer the voters a commitment that would cost a Labour government £450 million to implement.

Mr Brown's office swiftly confirmed that £120 million of the cost would be found by ending tax relief on private medical insurance for the elderly. The rest would come from a detailed tax package to be presented by Mr Brown in a speech in January.

On a day when the parties engaged in fierce exchanges about the Tories' tax record, Mr Brown said in his broadcast that every family in Britain would be better off as a result of his first Budget.

In the Commons earlier, he repeated Labour's claim that although the Chancellor had made modest tax cuts on Tuesday the total tax burden, taking account of increases that were already in the pipeline, would rise next year. He accused ministers of "systematic deception" adding: "The people were told they were going to have tax cuts year on year and were then let down. Whichever way you look at it, under this Government taxes have risen."

But Kenneth Clarke intervened to claim that the total tax burden was no higher than it was in 1991-92 before the last general election.

Mr Brown said that Budget tax rises on petrol, tobacco and other items would cost the taxpayer more than £2 billion in a full year and wipe out the impact of the 1p cut in income tax. "It's not just that they have given with one hand and taken with another. That we already know. It's in this Budget that they have once again taken more from the British people than they have given."

PETER RIDDELL

Brown must prove he can be more than a mere shadow

Gordon Brown is a brilliant single-minded, eloquent and witty, as he showed again in the Commons yesterday. But government is about decisions, not just words. Mr Brown's predicament is that the more he attacks the Government's economic plans, and the more Labour spokesmen protest about "cuts" in this or that programme, the more they show how little freedom of manoeuvre he would have as Chancellor and how limited Labour's options are.

Mr Clarke managed a skilful holding operation, based on optimistic economic assumptions. But any post-election Chancellor will almost certainly have to tighten

fiscal policy further to reduce an excessively high level of public borrowing for this stage of the recovery. Moreover, the closer the projections in the Red Book are examined, the more it is clear that the Government's spending plans are unsustainable. What is known as the control total is projected to rise by 0.2, 0.7 and 0.6 per cent respectively over the next three years in real terms. The overall rate of growth of spending has been reduced substantially in the past three years, but these figures will be hard to achieve without a further drastic squeeze on some programmes.

For example, the Treasury is projecting that spending on the NHS will rise next year but be



broadly flat in real terms for the following two years. According to Mr Clarke, what would happen next year, as in other recent years, would be that extra spending would be allocated to the NHS from the reserve. That means that some of the uncommitted reserve for unforeseen items has already been earmarked. Labour would therefore have little scope within current spending plans, let alone to deal with the complaints made by party spokesmen about underfunding of training, local authorities, the London underground etc.

Consequently, if Mr Brown, rather than Mr Clarke, had been delivering the Budget on Tuesday, his proposals would have been very much the same, at least in aggregate. The alternative Mr Brown offered in his broadcast last night was long on gestures, but shorter on differences of substance. There are the famous five early pledges — such as providing jobs and training for young people financed by the windfall levy on privatised utilities, smaller school classes paid for by phasing out the Assisted Places Scheme and reduced hospital waiting lists as a result of administrative savings. The financing proposals are mainly one-off actions of dubious merit, while Labour has not yet

established a watertight case for the utilities levy.

Mr Brown last night firmed up the party's promise to reduce VAT on heating bills from 8 per cent to the 5 per cent minimum allowed. This would cost £450 million and would be partly financed by ending tax relief for private medical insurance for the over-60s. But this would cover only just over a quarter of the cost and the rest will be revealed in Labour's detailed tax package early in the New Year. He also repeated the objective of a new lower starting rate of tax of 10p. So a Brown Budget might have had a different balance of tax measures, with no cut in the basic rate and different changes in allowances and

thresholds, even though Labour will not vote against these.

However, none of these proposals addresses the fiscal dilemma facing any new government. At present, Mr Brown is relying on a no-risk strategy of ruling out new spending commitments apart from those where financing is specifically identified, as above. But that is not good enough. If Labour is to offer a convincing alternative, and to avoid charges of betrayal after the election, it needs to make a start now of showing where it would save and raise money. Mr Brown has to prove he can graduate from being Shadow to real Chancellor.

PETER RIDDELL

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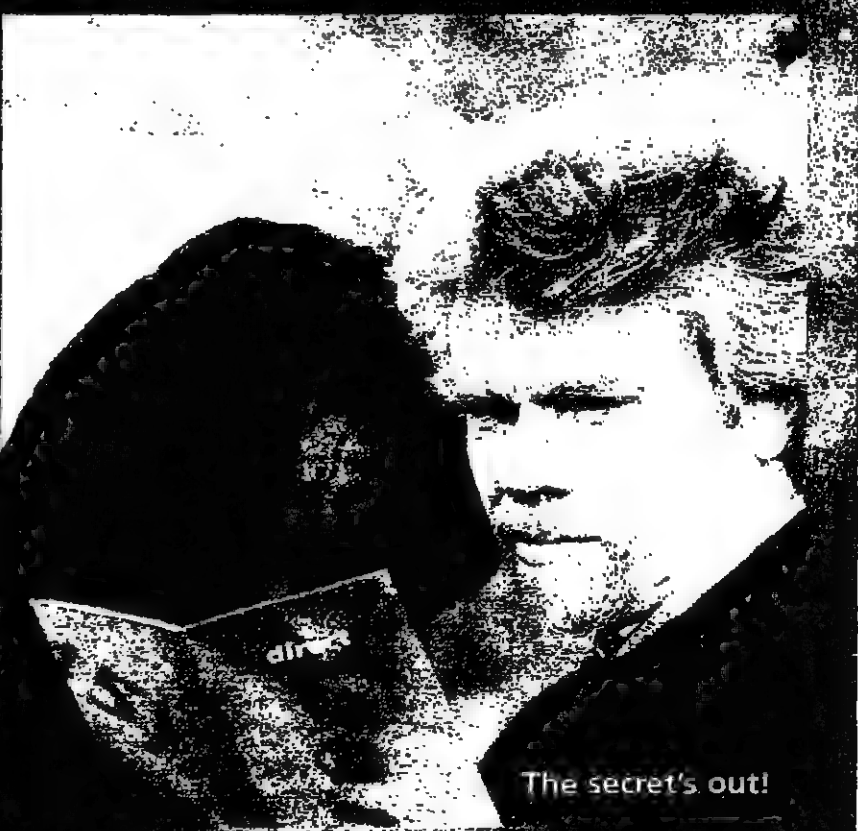
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12 HOME NEWS

The hole in Labour's land plan is on my lawn, says Heseltine

By MICHAEL HORNSBY
COUNTRYSIDE CORRESPONDENT

MICHAEL HESELTINE said yesterday that there was a hidden menace lurking behind Labour proposals for a legal "right to roam" over the countryside.

Recalling the "monstrous" invasion of his country estate by protesters against open-cast mining last month, the Deputy Prime Minister said that other landowners would be exposed to similar action if such a law went ahead. He was speaking after addressing a conference in London on access to the countryside, organised by the Country Landowners' Association, whose 50,000 members are estimated to own half of England and Wales.

Mr Heseltine said there was no case for legislation, even as a last resort against recalcitrant or irresponsible landowners. "I do not want to accept that, because there may be the odd exceptional case, you should menace the livelihood of large numbers of people in the farming and agricultural industry. These

people have to make their living in the countryside. They care deeply about the countryside, and the thought that the law is going to intrude further into their lives is something with which I have great sympathy.

"People who invaded my garden were Labour councillors, and that was a monstrous thing to do. It is actually the new Labour Party that invaded my farm in order to dig a hole."

In the incident at Mr

Heseltine's Palladian home, Thenford Hall in Northamptonshire, about 50 people armed with pickaxes dug a 10ft hole in his lawn. It was reported that two Labour councillors in Hammersmith and Fulham had been among the protesters. Donald Dewar, Labour's chief whip, subsequently promised to "deal with" the two if their involvement was proved.

The Labour Party was unable to say yesterday whether any action had been taken.

Elliot Morley, the Labour spokesman on rural affairs, who spoke at the conference in support of legislation allowing a qualified right to roam, said: "I am not aware that the protesters were Labour councillors, but we certainly would not condone any breaking of the law."

Mr Heseltine told delegates that he supported the CLA's view that voluntary agreements between local people, landowners and farmers were the best way to open up the countryside and that many such agreements were already in place. Right to roam legislation would be "impractical and unworkable", Mr Heseltine said, "and would secure additional access at the expense of increased disturbance to wildlife and livestock, erosion, pollution and vandalism. Although the Labour Party was talking about a qualified right, he feared that landowners would be subject to more demands once a right was established."

Mr Morley said that his party would bring in legislation to provide for a statutory right of access on foot to

uncultivated "mountain, moorland and existing common land", subject to reasonable restrictions to protect farming, shooting and nature conservation interests.

Attempts to increase access by negotiation had had only a limited impact, Mr Morley said. Only a fifth of common land was open to the public and access to an area of woodland twice the size of the Isle of Wight had been lost because of piecemeal sales of land by the Forestry Commission.

Alan Martingly, director of the Ramblers Association, which has 118,000 members, said voluntary agreements had proved costly, difficult or even impossible to negotiate on any scale. The only solution was for access to the countryside on foot to be based on legally protected rights.

Before the conference, Ewen Cameron, president of the CLA, was embarrassed by the disclosure that a public footpath had been blocked by a potato crop on his farm at Ilminster, Somerset. He said the temporary obstruction was a mistake by a farmhand.



Protesters at the Deputy Prime Minister's estate



Heseltine yesterday: "Labour invaded my farm"

Suffolk is safest for road users

By A STAFF REPORTER

THE safest roads in England and Wales are in Suffolk and Tyne and Wear, while London has the most dangerous, according to an accident league table published yesterday.

The table is based on the ratio of personal-injury road accidents to a county's population. Nearly two in five counties showed an increase in personal accidents last year, compared with 1994.

Greater London had 542 accidents per thousand population while the figure for both Tyne and Wear and Suffolk was 3.06. The biggest increases were in the former county of Avon (up 15.9 per cent) and Co Durham (up 9.5 per cent), while the biggest falls were in Powys (down 13.9 per cent), Norfolk (a fall of 12.1 per cent) and Cornwall (down 9.3 per cent).

After Greater London, the most accident-prone areas were Surrey (5.21 accidents per thousand population), Cheshire (4.71), Greater Manchester (4.62) and Cambridgeshire (4.61). The safest counties after Suffolk and Tyne and Wear were the former counties of Gwent (3.19), Mid Glamorgan and Avon (both 3.20).

Overall, the average number of accidents per thousand of population in England and Wales in 1995 was 4.13, compared with 4.21 in 1994. The total number of accidents fell from 217,324 to 213,851.

David Cull, marketing manager of Royal Insurance Direct, which produced the table, said: "Measures taken to make roads safer over the past ten years seem to have had a positive effect overall. However, with many counties recording an increase, there is no room for complacency."

Cl Mock driving tests which the Driving Standards Agency plans to introduce in the spring are an abuse of its monopoly, the British School of Motoring said.

The tests, which will cost more than the £28.50 for the real ones, would be "unwelcome and outside the DSA's legal boundaries" and would anger and confuse learner drivers, the BSM said. The DSA said that it was fully entitled to introduce them and that they could give candidates "a confidence boost".

Pharmacists win right to compete with country GPs

By DOMINIC KENNEDY, SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

COUNTRY doctors said yesterday that they might have to reduce their services to remote populations after losing a High Court action against pharmacists.

A test case, described as a battle between two professions, was won by the pharmacists, who established the right to open chemist's shops in direct competition with country GPs who dispense drugs.

The doctors were ordered to pay costs, likely to run into five figures, but were granted leave to take their case to the Court of Appeal. Many rural GPs receive an important part of their practice income from the sale of medicines at in-house pharmacies.

Michael Beloff, QC, for the doctors, told the two-day hearing that the outcome was of vital importance to the quality

of medical services provided by many rural practices.

Lord Justice Schiemann upheld a decision allowing Paul Watson and John Crump to open a pharmacy in Holme upon Spalding Moor, East Riding. Permission had been given by the local Family Health Services Authority in 1994, but the pharmacists have since faced a series of legal challenges by three GPs in the village: Simon Robinson, Jerry Marsden and Richard Moore.

The judge also backed Rajesh Morjaria, who opened a pharmacy in September this year in Madeley, Staffordshire, despite a risk that he would be forced to close it if John Worthington and partners, of the Moss Lane surgery, won their case. The Madeley doctors had invested £200,000 in a new wing to

their surgery and depended on income from dispensing drugs to pay off their debt.

However, the judge ruled that Family Health Services Authorities were not obliged to consider the impact on GPs' revenue, or the service they provided, when deciding whether to grant leave for chemist's shops to open.

The 1977 National Health Service Act, he said, made clear that doctors would be allowed to dispense drugs only in exceptional circumstances and that the prime suppliers of medicines should be pharmacists. Exceptions to the rule were made in rural areas where there was no independent pharmacy and where patients would have extreme difficulty because of distance or poor communications in getting to a chemist's shop.

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14 OVERSEAS NEWS

Aggrieved 'routiers' were driven to conflict

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

THE French lorry industry has been hurtling towards the current crisis at increasing speed for several years.

Most of the industry's 174,000 routiers insist they are underpaid, overworked and under-appreciated for a job that is boring, dangerous and lonely, but vital to the nation's economic health.

Haulage bosses, however, argue that with increasing European competition, a falling economy and higher fuel prices, they cannot improve the lot of their employees — at least not without huge government help to defray the social taxes that form a weighty part of every French payroll.

A study by the Department of Transport recently conceded that lorry drivers work longer hours for lower pay than most French workers. The average monthly take-home pay for a French driver is just Fr6,900 (£860), while many work more than 300 hours a month.

France has some 41,000 road transport companies, with a combined annual turnover of Fr35 billion, ranging from huge haulage companies to self-employed drivers in battered cars taking produce from village to village in rural France.

Nearly three-quarters of all such companies employ five people or less, and it is these that have been hit hardest by increased taxes on fuel, the price of which has risen by more than 45 pence a gallon in the past year alone.

In 1998 France will be completely open to European competition and many hauliers are fearful of being undercut by a flood of Spanish owner-drivers whose prices are at least 15 per cent lower than the French average.

A bitter grievance among drivers is that they are paid

only for time "on the road", and not for hours spent waiting or loading. "People may associate us with the Routier restaurants, but most French drivers can't afford to eat often in places like that. Mostly it's cold cans in the back of the cab," one union leader complained.

In October last year, a "progress contract" was put in place to reduce working hours gradually from 240 hours a month this year to 200 hours in 1999, but with haulage companies feeling the economic pinch the contract has been widely ignored.

The current dispute is the first to pit drivers against haulage bosses and the strength and organisation of the protest has taken both hauliers and the Government by surprise.

Union membership among French lorry drivers has traditionally been low, but since 1990 it has boomed and well over half the workforce is now unionised. As union leaders are quick to point out, the current strike is putting intense pressure on the state which is by far the largest user of commercial road haulage.

Drivers and bosses stood together in the 1992 strike to oppose a rigorous new points system on licences, but since then relations have soured as the threat of unemployment, now standing at a record 12.6 per cent, has grown.

"We have the most reactionary bosses in the world," declared Roger Polesi, the fiery head of the Force Ouvrière lorry union. "They have the mentality of 19th century shopkeepers."

Most French citizens support the lorry drivers' demands for higher pay, shorter hours and earlier retirement. Now it is they, rather than the bosses, who will pay for it.

Blockade leader declares war on Paris

FROM STEPHEN FARRELL IN CALAIS

A MILITANT French union official leading the Calais lorry blockade yesterday declared war against his Government and threatened to use petrol bombs and stones against riot police if they intervened.

In his distinctive black Russian hat and red jacket, Philippe Rault has quickly become a dockside figurehead for the French protesters who are stopping hundreds of British trucks crossing the Channel.

M Rault, 42, has been a CFDT transport union representative for just one week and is involved in his first blockade. "C'est la guerre," he insisted yesterday on the rainy, windswept tarmac where hundreds of lorries sat bumper to bumper for miles on end, their drivers powerless to deliver cargo or stop perishable loads rotting.

"In 1992 and 1993 in France we had a dispute and the police brought in tanks with ropes to drag the lorries away from the barricades," M Rault said. "If the police try to do it again here we will defend ourselves. It is war for all of us. We will use our hands, chairs, fire and Molotov cocktails, no problem."

"The Government in the past treated us like dogs, not like human beings. They never opened the doors to us. But this Government has opened the door a little for us to enter. If we hadn't blocked all of France the door would never have been opened."

M Rault is union representative for 60 French drivers at the Calais depot of Norbert Dentressangle, the company based in St Vallier, Le Drome. He said his men had not prepared petrol bombs or other defences in advance, but would do so "at the last minute," if riot police moved in.

However, he believed the solidarity of the truckers' na-



Philippe Rault monitors the blockade in Calais yesterday. The man controlling drivers obstructing traffic at the port, it is unclear whether he is a rogue official or is acting with the backing of union leaders in Paris

tionwide action and their success in blocking petrol depots used by government vehicles, made such intervention unlikely.

M Rault, surrounded by scores of French truckers manning the blockade, spoke as his Parisian union leaders began yet another round of talks with the Government and employers. It is unclear whether he is a rogue local official or acting with their backing. British officials yesterday claimed he had been ordered by fax to lift the blockade but M Rault denied receiving any instructions.

A father of four from Peupingues, near the Channel Tunnel entrance, he drives for the huge French company, Norbert Dentressangle, and spends three to four days a

week in Britain. He became a trucker four years ago after two and a half years of unemployment when he was laid off as a fireman after the British-owned Courtaulds depot in Calais was closed down. Two huge red

often seen at the head of the barricade explaining his men's position to British drivers and journalists. Although his English is good, he began insisting on using French yesterday, claiming British television spread lies that he

6 We will defend ourselves. It is war. We will use our hands, chairs, fire and Molotov cocktails, no problem 9

Dentressangle lorries stewed across the harbour entrance from the Calais blockade, with other entrances to the port blocked by large boulders and jagged metal road signs. M Rault insists he admires the British lorry drivers. He is

had been ordered to end the dispute. M Rault and his men have three main demands, a retirement age of 55, more pay and better working conditions. The first has been granted. He protests that his company only pays drivers

for working 198 hours a month, although they often work 20 or 30 more hours without pay while waiting or loading trucks.

He acknowledges his demands for his gross pay of Fr7,500 a month (£1,000) to be raised to Fr10,000 are unlikely to be met. His men have some sympathy from British drivers, not least Don Paddon, 46, from Hemel Hempstead who also works for Dentressangle but is paid overtime, unlike his French colleagues.

"I agree with what they're doing. To be honest Rault and the other French drivers are all right so far, there is no animosity and they have been sharing their coffee and whisky with us over the last couple of nights," Mr Paddon said.

Shiftless sons the bane of Italian 'mammias'

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

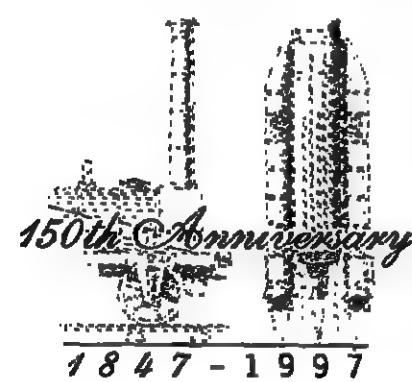
THE image of the Italian male as "mamma's boy" is reinforced this week by a poll showing that more than half of Italian men live at home with one or both parents until the age of 35.

The poll, published in *La Repubblica*, coincided with a court case in which a 46-year-old woman was forced to take her "shiftless" 24-year-old son back into her home after evicting him.

A court in Ferrara ruled that a shop assistant, named only as Anna Maria, had acted improperly in refusing to give house room to her son, Luca. She said she had been separated from her husband for a year and, as a single parent, had quite enough to do looking after her 11-year-old daughter without cooking and cleaning for Luca. She said her son, a petrol-pump attendant, was quite capable of finding a flat of his own, but preferred to spend his money on "fast cars and designer clothes". She said he had struck her, insulted her and "broken everything in the house", while refusing to contribute to the household budget. She had thrown him out, and he had gone to "sponge off" his grandparents instead.

Luca took legal advice and the case went to the local court where the judge, Francesco Salzano, found no evidence that the family's circumstances were as "intolerable" as Luca's mother had claimed.

But *La Repubblica* said the mother had "every right to throw her son out". "Even maternal love has its limits," it said in an editorial. "If the young man had been her husband rather than her son, the court would have had no difficulty in agreeing to a separation or divorce." It added that there was "something profoundly wrong with a society of eternal children who always want their mamma".



The IMechE Highest Flyers Awards



As part of its 150th Anniversary celebrations, the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) invited every secondary school in the United Kingdom to identify the young people who achieved the most passes at GCSE or Scottish Standard level.

The winners of IMechE's Highest Flyers Awards have passes in English Language, Mathematics, a second language, Physics and Chemistry (including double award), or equivalent technology subjects, together with as many further passes as possible, typically achieving a dozen or so A or A* passes or a weighted number of Scottish awards.

Significantly, the winners are not required to be planning a career in mechanical engineering. The Institution believes that by gaining an appreciation of the social and economic importance of engineering, the 150 brightest pupils of '96 will be at an advantage, whatever their career choice.

The winning students will be presented with a bronze medal and £150 at a special ceremony to be held at the Institution's headquarters in London on 20 March 1997. They will also be taken to the world-leading Rutherford Appleton Laboratories for an introduction to the world of mechanical engineering. The students will be enrolled in a career-long club of excellence, *The IMechE 150 Club*, which will follow and reward them as their careers develop.

Recognising the important role that the schools have played, awards of a plaque and £1500 will be made to the ten schools that have the most students in the top 150.

The Institution of Mechanical Engineers has over 78,000 members worldwide. For information on membership or any other aspect of the Institution's work in promoting mechanical engineering, please contact:

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Matthew Angus	Daniel Stewart's and Mobile College	Edinburgh
Ronan Ardie	St Ambrose College	Altrincham
Colin Ball	King Edward's School	Birmingham
Stephen Ball	King Edward's School	Birmingham
Alan Barnett	St Paul's School	Barnes
Stephen Bartlett-Jones	Wilson's School	Warrington
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Simon Driver	Nottingham High School	Nottingham
Charles Edwards	St Paul's School	Barnes
Alexander Edwards	St Paul's School	Barnes

Julian Ellison	Warrington High School for Girls	Warrington
Sharon E-Walsh	Perse School for Girls	Cambridge
Ellen Evans	St Nicholas R.C. High School	St Nicholas
Elizabeth Ferguson	The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School	Hereford
Rabeca Finch	Postlewood High School	Newcastle
David Flood	Magdalen College School Oxford	Oxford
Rob Gault-Quinn	Lancing College	Lancing
Neil Gault-Quinn	Cheltenham College	Cheltenham
Christina Gilson	Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School	Tunbridge Wells
Phillips Gillings	Cheltenham County High School for Girls	Cheltenham
Benjamin Goss	Calder Grammar School	Calder
Matthew Goss	St John Baptist Comprehensive	Abingdon
Rebecca Hale	Sir William Borlase's Grammar School	Reading
Laura Halliday	King Edward's School	Birmingham
Elodie Harper	Francis Holland School	Birmingham
Alexander Harris	Colchester Royal Grammar	Colchester
Rebecca Hartman	Ysgol Friars	Bangor
Julian Hartley	St Andrew's School	Altrincham
Andrew Hill	Emmanuel College	Gateshead
Kris Hill	King Edward's School	Birmingham
Robbie Holden	St Paul's School	Barnes
Sarah Holley	Warrington High School for Girls	Warrington
Daniel Hooper	Bishop Challenger R.C. School	Birmingham
Timothy Howes	King Edward's School	Birmingham
Carl Hunter	School of St Helen and St Katherine	Abingdon
Kendal Imboden	Westminster School	London
David Ingram	Gosforth High School	Paisley
Aarti Jain	King Edward VI High School for Girls	Birmingham
Nashir Javed	St Paul's School	Barnes
Amal Jordan	Mulvern College	Worcester
Roshan Kumar	Calder Grammar School	Calder
Katherine Lambert	King Edward VI High School for Girls	Birmingham
Marwan Lamin	Dalkeith High School	Dalkeith
Christopher Lamm	King Edward's School	Birmingham
Catherine Leigh	Dean Close School	Cheltenham
Luck-Lan Lo	Postlewood High School	Newcastle
Chloe Loney	Robert School	Bangor
Kathryn Lloyd	Ysgol y Ffawr	Bangor
Martin Lloyd	King Edward's School	Birmingham
Brydley Lord	Bedford School	Bedford
James Lovell	St Paul's School	Barnes

Deven Mander	King Edward VI High School for Girls	Birmingham
John Marriott	Postlewood High School	Newcastle
Alexander Marsh	Dorothy Stringer High School	Brighton
Joanna May	King Edward VI High School for Girls	Birmingham
Lindsay McFarlane	St William Borlase's Grammar School	Reading
Edward McGovern	Cheltenham College	Cheltenham
Craig McMillan	Stewart Academy	Stewart
John McMillan	Cummock Academy	Cummock
John McMillan	St Theodore's R.C. High School	St Theodore's
Thomas McNeill	King Edward's School	Birmingham
Robert McNeill	Camp Hill School for Boys	Birmingham
Katherine Miller	Red Bank Upper School	Amphill
Nicholas Munday	The Herrietha Barnet School	Herrietha
Gregor Miller	Leighton Academy	Edinburgh
Rachel Millar	King Edward's School	Birmingham
Alexander Murdoch	Reading School	Reading
William Norcott	Cheltenham College	Cheltenham
Nicholas O'Donnell	Epsom and Ewell High School	West Ewell
Ellen Parker	Perse School for Girls	Cambridge
Christopher Phipps	Dalkeith High School	Dalkeith
Yvonne Pickford	School of St Helen and St Katherine	Abingdon
Garth Poid	Wrekin College	Telford
Osama Poole	Farnborough Hill	Farnborough
Rebecca Poulton	St William Borlase's Grammar School	Reading
Helen Practice	Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School	Tunbridge Wells
Rebecca Preece	The Brighthelm School	Windsor
Michael Pardon	King Edward's School	Birmingham
David Parnes	Nottingham High School	Nottingham
Thomas Parnes	Lancing College	Lancing
Carl Richardson	Chase High School	Wokingham
Simon Robinson	Westwood High School	Leek
Mark Rodde	St Nicholas R.C. High School	St Nicholas
Thomas Rose	Calder School	Calder
Nathan Russell	Dean Close School	Cheltenham
Kelly Sam	Brooke Weston City Technology College	Corby
Anne Schmitt	Dorothy Stringer High School	Brighton
Ellen Seel	King Edward's School	Birmingham
Jonathan Sheppard	Reading School	Reading
Markus Shill	Reading School	Reading
Anna Schuler	Dorothy Stringer High School	Brighton
Ellen Shill	Emmanuel College	Gateshead

Thomas Spaight	Lancing College	Lancing
Stephen Spence	King Edward's School	Birmingham
Jennifer Stevenson	Sherborne School for Girls	Sherborne
Helen Sturdy	Dean Close School	Cheltenham
Katherine Sturgeon	Perse School for Girls	Cambridge
Sandeep Sunkar	King Edward's School	Birmingham
James Szustak	Harford High School	Harford
James Taylor	Perse School	Cambridge
Mark Thomas	Ysgol Gyllen Aberon	Aberon
Julian Thorpe	Our Lady's School	Barnes
Benjamin Tugwell	Cheltenham College	Cheltenham
Alexandra Tugwell	The City of Leicester School	Leicester
Antonia Vavrova	Perse School for Girls	Cambridge
Marie Vavrova	Connaught School for Girls	Leighton
Alan Waddell	Webster's High School	Altrincham
Caroline Walker	Perse School	Cambridge
Kathryn Warner	Calder School	Calder
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Laura Wilson	Dorothy Stringer High School	Brighton

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St Paul's School	Barnes
Cheltenham College	Cheltenham
Dean Close School	Cheltenham
Dorothy Stringer High School	Brighton
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US racketeering court can rule on German car wars

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

THE car war between Volkswagen and General Motors — an epic tale of betrayal, espionage and bruised vanity — entered a decisive phase yesterday as the German manufacturer reeled from a federal judgment that it could be investigated under US racketeering laws.

Volkswagen shares plunged on the German stock exchange and while the company put a brave face on the US ruling, it was plainly rattled.

General Motors claims that Jose Ignacio Lopez, its former manager, took cratesloads of secret documents with him when Volkswagen poached him three years ago from Opel, GM's German subsidiary.

"There was no industrial espionage on behalf of Volkswagen," a VW company spokesman said yesterday. "Volkswagen is adamant that thorough investigations by independent investigators have given no indication that VW had access to, or made use of, Opel-GM business secrets."

US district judge Nancy Edwards has nonetheless accepted GM's claim that the espionage case can be dealt with in America under the Rico (Racketeer Influenced

and Corrupt Organisations) Act. The racketeering argument is based on the GM claim that Ferdinand Piech, Volkswagen's chairman, and other senior executives, conspired to steal General Motors secrets, using a corporate jet to ferry the documents to VW's guest villa in Wolfsburg.

The documents, says GM, were then copied into VW computers, and shredded. VW pointed out that the judge had not ruled for or against GM's allegations, but had merely decided that the case qualified as a Rico investigation.

The practical implication is that if VW is found guilty, it could be saddled with a

payout amounting to billions of dollars. It has not been a good year for Volkswagen. A historian has just completed a large company history, presenting documents that show it used slave labour during the Second World War. A concentration camp was even set up close to the car factory to provide workers.

GM and Opel have won a series of court victories in recent weeks against VW and Senior Lopez. His lawyer says he expects German prosecutors to file criminal charges against his client soon, which can only further tarnish the image of VW.

A Frankfurt court last Friday approved the transfer of German investigation documents to the US Justice Department and FBI.

"The company seems to have been hit simultaneously by the plague, fire and the tempest," said an industrial observer yesterday.

Opel's conditions for a deal are the dismissal of Senior Lopez, well-publicised apologies, and a great deal of cash. More than 50 lawyers are currently employed by the two manufacturers.

Meanwhile, the French lorry drivers' dispute is leading to layoffs at VW.



Piech: accused of conspiracy to steal



A protestor carries a torch during a demonstration in Belgrade yesterday. The Serbian democratic opposition is protesting at the restaging of local elections which they say they had already won. They accuse the ruling Socialists of blatant election rigging. An appeal to the Supreme Court to stop the poll has been rejected

Prodi cautioned over single currency

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

CESARE ROMITI, the head of Fiat and one of Italy's most powerful industrialists, yesterday warned Romano Prodi, the embattled Prime Minister, not to "rush into the single currency" even

though the lira has re-joined the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM). "Europe can wait," Signor Romiti said. The priority should be to reduce unemployment and avoid recession.

The lira re-entered the ERM last weekend after a four-year absence, as part of Italy's bid to join the European

single currency in 1999. But after tortuous negotiations it entered at a much less favourable rate than Italy had wanted. Signor Prodi, in addition to public protests over the "budget for Europe" yesterday faced calls for his resignation following charges that he was involved in "irregularities" in 1993.

Spanish fish row 'will end soon'

BY TUNKE VARADARAJAN

BRITAIN and Spain "expect to reach an agreement very soon" on the vexed question of fish quota-hoppers, John Major said yesterday.

Speaking at Downing Street on the occasion of the visit to London of Jose Maria Aznar, the Spanish Prime Minister, Mr Major emphasised why a solution to the problem, which has led to a depletion of Britain's fish stocks by British-flagged Spanish fishermen, was needed urgently.

He said: "The impact on our fishing villages has been great. For every fisherman at sea, there are large numbers of people on land whose livelihoods depend on the catch."

Responding to Señor Aznar's criticism of the Castro regime in Cuba, which on Tuesday said it would refuse to accept the newly appointed Spanish Ambassador to Havana, Mr Major offered the Spanish Government Britain's unqualified support. He said: "Cuba's treatment of the Spanish Ambassador is simply not tolerable."

Both Prime Ministers were cautious about Gibraltar, the one bilateral issue on which little progress was made yesterday. Officials from the two countries are to meet "in the next few days" to discuss ways of restarting the so-called Brussels process of talks.

Kohl steady under fire over euro rules

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

GERMANY yesterday defended its demands for sanctions against countries which stray from budgetary virtue in a future single currency as Bonn faced mounting pressure from France and other European partners.

Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, insisted that the so-called stability pact was vital to ensure that the euro remained a "hard currency". "That is not arrogance, but comes from 50 years of experience in Germany," he told parliament.

But he came under attack from Olivier Lafontaine, leader of the Social Democrat opposition, over the pact, which is being drafted for the Dublin EU summit next month. "With 18 million out of work in Europe we don't need a stability pact, but a pact for jobs and growth," he said.

EU monetary officials failed this week to reach a compromise that would satisfy Bonn's headline conditions for defining the circumstances in which countries would be

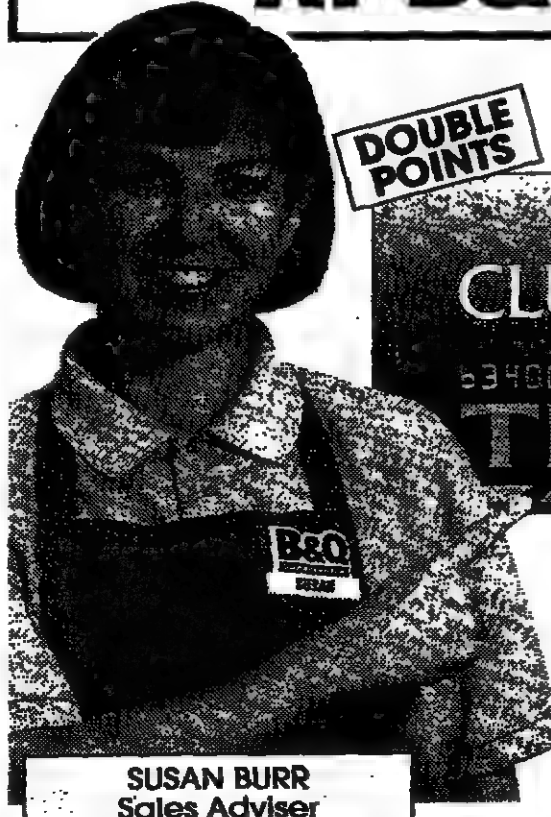
exempt from paying heavy fines for running high deficits. Finance ministers are to try again for agreement on Monday, but Klaus Kinkel, the Irish Finance Minister, said last night that it was far from certain that the pact would even be settled in Dublin. Only The Netherlands supports Germany's harder conditions, although all EU states agree to the principle of imposing fines on delinquent EMU members in certain conditions.

Unhappiness over the pact in France prompted Alain Juppé, the Prime Minister, yesterday to voice criticism of the German approach. EU leaders should be left with responsibility for deciding each year how to apply the rules on stability, he said.

Jacques Delors, the former president of the EU Commission, who led the Commission in the Maastricht negotiations, accused Germany of putting a higher priority on deficit-cutting than on growth and reducing unemployment.

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Gregory Rasputin, the "mad monk" and mystic healer, with a group of society admirers and devotees in about 1915. All the women have now been indentified by the Russian historian Edvard Radzinsky

were businessmen who were also unhappy at the meeting.

The 90-minute meeting, to discuss joint ventures in tour-

Jewish side, the participants included residents of two of the most militant settlements.

were businessmen who were also unhappy at the meeting.


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FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER
IN JERUSALEM

Jewish side, the participants included residents of two of the most militant settlements.

were Palestinians who were also unhappy at the meeting.


surveillance of the Siberian monk. Some of this was


to publish his research with-

crucising aboard the royal

yacht **Standard** in 1910.

ism and power struggles.

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Afghan leaders gather for final assault on Kabul

A STORM is brewing at the foot of the snow-covered Hindu Kush. Yet more chilling for the fortunes of the Taliban fighters is the icy confidence of Ahmed Shah Masood, the "Lion of Panjshir". On General Masood's shoulders rests the fate of the Afghan capital as he finalises his plans to retake Kabul.

Striding into his headquarters in Jabal os-Siraj with characteristic panache, General Masood takes his seat in his inimitable style: legs crossed, his right index finger resting on his cheek, and a brow furrowed.

His hooked nose, sweeping black hair and the pakol hat perched jauntily on the back of his head suggest something of a cross between Bob Marley and Bob Dylan. Although he is prepared for peace, he appears to be much more ready for war.

"The other side is ready for negotiation then so are we," he began, knowing that all attempts so far at mediation with the Taliban have broken down. "But if not, then we shall fight on to reach a belt of land around Kabul. As we don't want to take the battle into the city when we reach this line the residents inside shall solve the other problems for themselves," he added, hinting at an insurrection from inside the city.

"The targets of our forces are clear: we shall then enter

At the foothills of the Hindu Kush, General Masood poses a chilling threat to the fortunes of the Taliban warriors. Anthony Loyd writes from Jabal os-Siraj

Kabul, set up a government with a broad base, a commission to stabilise security within the city, and form the basis for a referendum. Our allies have agreed to everything. The Taliban shall have no dream of theirs fulfilled in the near future."

Day by day events in the small, muddy town seem to lend credence to his words. While the bazaar is alive with rumours of an imminent "general attack", loyalist commanders of the ousted Gov-



Masood: exudes icy confidence

ernment from the most far flung of northern provinces have been gathering at Jabal os-Siraj for briefings and to receive orders.

More troops loyal to General Masood's former enemy, General Abdul Rashid Dostum, the Uzbek warlord, have appeared at the front line bearing artillery and armour. General Dostum is now in overall command of the coalition forces.

At one such meeting of the allies recently General Masood reiterated his wish that there should be no looting of houses in the capital; this was the type of detail that a commander usually relays at the end of the war rather than at the beginning of the action.

However, there are many imponderables in Afghanistan's civil war. Simple questions of troop numbers and disposition mean little, as these aspects are undermined by more abstract concepts such as which commanders will desert to the other side at any given moment for more money or security. There is also the complex issue of clan rivalries between forces of Gen-

eral Masood and General Dostum in the newly cobbled military coalition.

Although General Dostum may be in overall command, he would probably be content to negotiate with the Taliban if it were not for General Masood's vanguard of warriors. How the alliance bears up against the evenly matched Taliban remains to be seen. Kabul could be retaken by Christmas, or held by the Taliban for a decade.

There is one grim certainty though. Eight months ago I asked General Masood what his greatest concern was; he had answered "that foreign intervention in Afghanistan will lose the capital."

That fear was realised with Pakistan's continuing support for the Taliban advance. When I asked him the question again, he said: "I hope only that the fighting will not return to being a conflict within the city."

With no end in sight to the 17-year conflict in Afghanistan, the intractability of the Taliban, and the coalition force assembled to the north, it seems only a matter of time before the city's streets echo once more to the sound of gunfire.

Delhi: India yesterday reiterated its support for Burhanuddin Rabbani, the ousted Afghan President, and called for the demilitarisation of Kabul. (Reuters)



A Taliban artillery unit kneels in prayer at dusk near the front line north of Kabul. All attempts so far at mediation with the Islamic warriors have failed

Hutus put pressure on exiles to stay

FROM SAM KILEY IN SAKA, EASTERN ZAIRE

HUTU extremists yesterday tried desperately to keep their grip on refugees heading home for Rwanda, insisting that they should stay in eastern Zaire and hope that foreign relief would arrive to help them to remain in exile.

Members of the *interhamwe* (those who kill together) scuttled up and down long queues of fellow Hutu refugees waiting to mount trucks in Saka which would drive them the last 15 miles back to Rwanda. The refugees had spent a month wandering in the jungle and anxiously dodging fighting between the militia and east Zaire's rebels.

"We want everyone to stay where they are. It is too dangerous to go home," a former administrator insisted. He denied he was a member of the militia, who have been hunted down by the Rwandan-backed rebels.

Many other refugees said that they had not been harmed by the guerrillas on their trek through the forests and steep mountains of the Musili region west of Goma, but said that young men had been separated from other groups.

"They were taken away. I assume they have been killed," said Yves. The former law student at Kigali University escaped the brutal screening process being carried out in the interior of Zaire because, although he is only 20, four weeks of playing a deadly game of hide-and-seek in which he tried to escape the Hutu militia and simultaneously avoid the rebels, left him looking closer to 40.

Yves also confirmed other reports that up to 100,000 refugees, mostly the *interhamwe* and their families, had set up a base at Walekale, 50 miles west of Saka.

With many refugees finding their way back to Rwanda having shaken off the *interhamwe* and survived rebel purges of suspected militia-men, eastern Zaire now looks ripe for a final showdown between the Hutu extremists and the rebels.

The *interhamwe* come across as a bit stupid. Setting up a base in Walekale is an invitation to attack them. I suspect that we will accept," Laurent Kabila, leader of the rebel movement, said.

Hijackers wanted to hit hotel and village

FROM INIGO GILMORE IN MORONI

MORE details are starting to emerge about the hijackers who caused the Ethiopian Airways tragedy this week and their determination that everyone on board should die. The co-pilot of the Boeing 767 has disclosed that the pilot was ordered to crash into a village near Le Calvaire Hotel on the island, and then into the hotel. But despite being hit on the head with an axe, he managed to manoeuvre the aircraft away from the hotel, and crash-landed 500 yards from the beach.

Details, emerged during conversations between the co-pilot and Frank Sander, the front desk manager of the hotel, who was involved in rescuing several survivors.

"The true story is only now coming out and it is not clear why the men were so determined to die," said Mr Sander yesterday. "The pilot cannot be praised enough. He was incredibly brave."

Two men arrested after being identified by survivors as the hijackers are still being held on the island. They are to appear in court today, although speculation has been mounting that the real hijackers may be dead and the two may be falsely accused passengers. They insist they are innocent and have demanded to be released.

Comorians have been accused of failing to help the injured from the aircraft, and of looting washed-up luggage.

Newlyweds sell crash video

BY CHRISTOPHER WALKER

A COUPLE from South Africa honeymooning on the Comoros Islands disclosed yesterday that they had sold a video recording of the crash of the hijacked Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 767, in which 125 people died, for \$65,000 (£39,000).

In a radio interview, Dolf Gouws from Pretoria said his 23-year-old bride Marinda filmed the whole crash as they were relaxing on a beach. After a frantic auction among world media organisations, Mr Gouws said their video tape was bought by Worldwide Television News. "Me and my wife were getting a tan there and she was filming me and while she was busy with the video, the aircraft came out of the palm trees... it was about a metre above the

sea," he said. At first the newlyweds thought they were watching an air show.

"Although we made a great deal of money from the crash, we were really upset about it and felt terrible for the people who were killed," Mrs Gouws said.



The hijacked Boeing 767 crashes into the sea in a still from the honeymoon couple's amateur video

said. The Boeing 767 was hijacked on Saturday as it flew from Addis Ababa to Nairobi and crashed off the Comoros, 190 miles off the African coast, when it ran out of fuel. Fifty people, including two Britons, survived the crash.

Rwanda priests save handicapped children

FROM AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE IN BUKAVU

Bukavu: Priests saved 52 handicapped children from last month's fighting in eastern Zaire, carrying many on their backs through the mountains. The refugees, due to return with relief workers to Rwanda this weekend, spent ten days away from Bukavu.

As shells rained down around their mission and Tutsi rebels advanced on the regional centre, eight priests - six Belgian and two Zaireans - decided to escort the children, aged between 11 and 18, to a safe refuge in the hills. Brother Bernard of the Brothers of Charity said.

The children, mostly physically handicapped but including two who are visually impaired, one blind and three

mentally handicapped, were showing increasing signs of panic as the fighting neared, he said. "We decided to leave. There was savage fighting in the region. It was the safest thing to do. Half the town's population had already left. We must have been the last."

"We were helped by some of our local novices and we formed a group of about 100 people," Brother Bernard said. "We found ourselves caught up in the human tide... it took us four days to cover the ten miles."

One child - a blind boy called Joseph - was lost among the thousands fleeing. He was traced to Kisangani, but there has been no sighting of him since.

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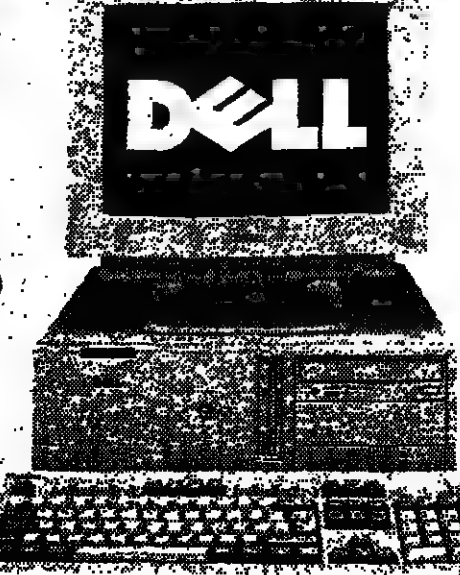
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18 OVERSEAS NEWS

THE TIMES THURSDAY NOVEMBER 28 1996

Republicans ready to take on Clinton in battle for poor

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT CLINTON is girding himself to try to soften the blow of new welfare laws on America's poorest people. The move will provoke a battle with the Republicans, bringing three weeks of post-election harmony to an abrupt end.

The President, who returned to Washington yesterday after his 12-day Asian tour, wants to claw back a quarter of the \$55 billion (£33 billion) cuts in government welfare spending, which will otherwise come into effect on January 1 — dubbed the Day of Armageddon by liberal welfare groups.

The move is set to put Mr Clinton on a collision course with the Republican-controlled Congress, which is staunchly opposed to changes. Clay Shaw, a Florida Congressman who was one of the Bill's architects, says: "Any substantive change would certainly be rejected. There's no sense changing it before you give it a chance to work."

The new law, drawn up last year by a Republican-backed Congress, radically changes the federal government safety net that has been in place for six decades since President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. It sharply cuts benefits paid by Washington, and

aims to push people to work by removing state benefits. State governors, who have the freedom to devise the details of the scheme for their region, are rushing to draw up plans. New York has drafted one of the harshest.

Problems are emerging by the day. With the economy slowing down, jobs are scarce, particularly ones suitable for people with few skills. States may have to create "fake work" on their own payrolls and pay for workers' childcare at the same time, pushing up their welfare spending.

State governors are increasingly worried that local taxes will rise, encouraging well-off people to move away, while attracting poorer people from other states. Their alternative is to leave the poorest people without any safety net.

Mr Clinton, who campaigned in 1992 on the promise that he would "end welfare as we know it", rejected two earlier versions of the Bill, saying they were too harsh on children.

However, in a move which symbolised his conservative brand of Democratic policy, he signed the third version in August, before his election campaign, in an attempt to court middle-class voters concerned about rising taxes.

During the campaign, Mr Clinton told voters to back him so that he could fix the new legislation. He cannot postpone that commitment, as he must thrash out the outlines of next year's budget within the next two months.

White House officials are cautiously optimistic about the chances of persuading Congress to increase food stamps to families with high housing costs, who tend to have a large number of children. Stamps are worth an average of \$177 a month to households. But officials are more gloomy about persuading Congress to lift the ban on food stamps for legal immigrants.

Most controversial of all, Mr Clinton may ask Congress to relax the rule that gives adults with no dependants only three months of food stamps every three years unless they find work.

He faces an uphill struggle, as the clause has widespread middle-class support. Trent Lott, the Senate majority leader, claims that Mr Clinton will face widespread popular opposition if he "starts pleading the case of how able-bodied people, under 50 with no dependent children, should be able to get limitless food stamps, every year and forever".



President Clinton cuddles new-born babies during an Alaskan stopover yesterday as he returned from Asia

Reno joins alliance against President

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

THE Clintons have returned to Washington to face the unlikely alliance of Janet Reno, the lonely US Attorney-General with Parkinson's disease, and Republicans, who have threatened retaliation if the President forces her resignation from a second-term Cabinet.

Ms Reno's undying liberalism combined with her independent role at the Justice Department, where she has overseen the myriad investigations of scandals involving Mr Clinton and his wife, Hillary, are seen by White House loyalists as a continuing stumbling block to the success of the re-elected Administration.

Republicans on Capitol Hill, however, view Ms Reno as the only person

able to keep the White House in check. Trent Lott, the Senate majority leader, has announced he will implement a new round of hearings against the White House should Ms Reno be forced to resign and may even oppose the appointment of William Weld, the moderate Republican Governor of Massachusetts, who has announced that he would gladly accept the job.

In effect, three years after she emerged as his rising Cabinet star, Ms Reno has become not merely Mr Clinton's greatest headache in Cabinet but also the woman he cannot afford to sack.

On his Asian tour this week, Mr Clinton finally acknowledged that he would meet Ms Reno at some time after the Thanksgiving holiday, starting tomorrow, to discuss her future. The Attorney-General has made it

clear that she does not want to leave the Justice Department. "I take each day as it comes," she said this week. "I'm like Scarlett O'Hara. And when I think about what else I'm going to do, I'll think about that tomorrow."

Her comparison to the embattled fictional character is one that many in Washington recognise. Despite her earlier prominence and close association with the Clintons, Ms Reno now suffers from encroaching Parkinson's disease and is never to be found at the intimate pizza and popcorn soirées held in the White House screening room. And while the Cabinet room has buzzed with post-election victory fever, she has been a subdued and solitary figure, engrossed in thought.

Ironically, Republicans on Capitol Hill were the very ones who demanded Ms Reno's resignation in the past. Her

sanctioning of a government raid on the Branch Davidian sect in Waco, Texas, in 1993, leaving 80 members of the cult dead, had caused a sharp partisan call for her dismissal.

But her ability since to remain above the fray of scandal has restored many Americans' faith in justice. Described by *Time* magazine as the "loneliest woman in Washington", Ms Reno remains a force Mr Clinton cannot reckon without.

Drug chief quits: David Kessler, commissioner at the Food and Drug Administration and the most outspoken critic of the tobacco industry, announced his resignation, despite White House attempts to keep him in place. Mr Kessler, who first made moves to classify nicotine as a drug last year, sent tobacco stocks soaring with news of his departure.

Thanksgiving cooks can do their stuff

BY TOM RHODES

EVEN as President Clinton released the traditional Thanksgiving turkey on the White House lawn yesterday the Government was embroiled in a heated debate over the dangers of stuffing the millions of birds to be cooked for America's biggest holiday.

In August, the US Agriculture Department issued the strongest warning to Americans against stuffing their turkeys. The food and safety inspection service advised that "improperly cooked stuffing can cause serious illness or even death."

On the eve of Thanksgiving today, however, and under pressure from the turkey industry, the US Government has watered down that advice. "The stuffing should be moist rather than dry," the latest recommendations say. "And the centre of the stuffing must reach 165F (74C)."

No longer is there any mention of death by salmonella. Instead, cooks are told to measure the internal temperature of the stuffing with a

thermometer. If they are unwilling to do that, then the stuffing should be cooked outside the bird.

Erin O'Brien, of the Turkey Federation, said: "Obviously, they realised that the public was going to go crazy with not being able to stuff their turkeys and came to some agreement."

In Louisiana, residents of the bayou have found their own solution. Instead of stuffing their turkeys with a mix of meat and eggs, they have created the turducken — a deboned turkey stuffed with a deboned duck stuffed with a deboned chicken.

The strange fowl is said to be flying off butcher's shelves in the South, and it has even caught on as far north as the Rockies.

But the majority of Americans will stick to straight turkey with only the fortunate White House bird escaping the dinner table tonight.

The 60lb bird, presented to Mr Clinton for the traditional presidential pardon, was then sent to a petting zoo outside Washington.

Mandela upgrades China ties

Johannesburg: South Africa is to end diplomatic recognition of Taiwan in favour of China, President Mandela said yesterday. During apartheid rule, South Africa had been a close ally of Taiwan while they were both shunned by international diplomacy.

Three months ago, Mr Mandela said it would be "immoral" for him to drop Taipei. Yesterday, however, he said Pretoria's guiding diplomatic principle to the greater China region had been to seek cordial relations with both Chinas. Taiwan has issued a protest. (Reuters/AP)

Duchess of chat

New York: The Duchess of York, who has appeared on many American chat shows in the past two weeks, has had "a number of offers" from television producers to front shows, her aides said.

'Abuse' by police

Jerusalem: Israeli border police routinely mistreat Palestinians, and officers convicted of abuse should be punished more harshly, Michael Ben-Yair, the Attorney-General, said in a letter. (AP)

Gandhi ruling

New Delhi: Ashes of India's leader Mahatma Gandhi, left unclaimed for 46 years in a bank vault, must be immersed according to Hindu custom in the Ganges river, the Supreme Court said. (AP)

Bhutto setback

Islamabad: A Pakistani court withdrew a detention order on Asif Ali Zardari, the husband of Benazir Bhutto, the ousted Prime Minister, but another was issued, keeping him under arrest. (Reuters)

Paternity suits

Nuremberg: Parishioners of St Mary's Catholic Church here want their priest of the last 11 years to stay, although he is to become a father. But the diocese is insisting on the rules of celibacy. (AFP)

Opposition freed

Jakarta: Judges freed 124 supporters of Megawati Sukarnoputri, Indonesia's opposition figure, who were arrested four months ago after riots. Of those freed, only nine were acquitted. (Reuters)

Farewell to arms

Lisbon: Portugal's police detectives want more "danger money" and are threatening to hand in their guns and to strike for two days next month if the demand is not met, their union president said. (Reuters)

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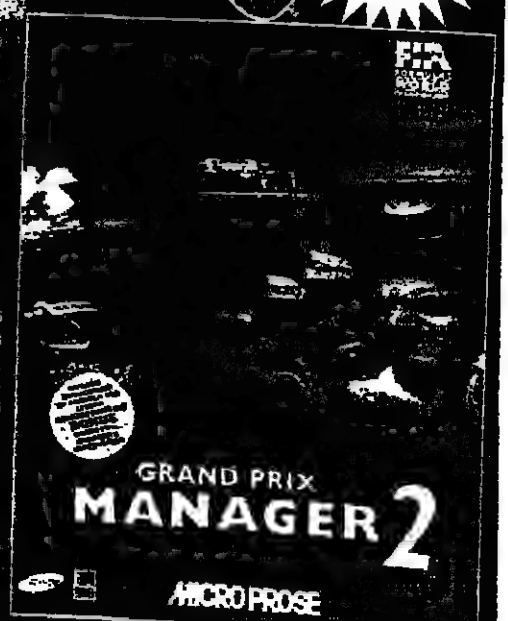
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Justice truly blind at Alabama court of sightless judge

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN BESSEMER

TWO peeved customers stomped out of Judge Tony Cothren's courthouse in Bessemer, Alabama, feeling they had wasted their time. The couple had claimed they were underprivileged. The fella came in hobbling like an old man and his woman was wearing the oldest, dirtiest clothes she owned," recalled the judge laughing. "Didn't do them no good, of course."

Judge Cothren is blind — the first sightless judge in Alabama, a state where until the 1960s many blacks struggled to get justice because people were judged on what they could see, particularly skin colour. With Judge Cothren, justice is truly blind.

The judge is also notable for being a Republican, which in a traditionally Democrat state has ensured him a bumpy first few months on the bench.

In Jefferson County Circuit Court this week in this forum, town 20 miles south of



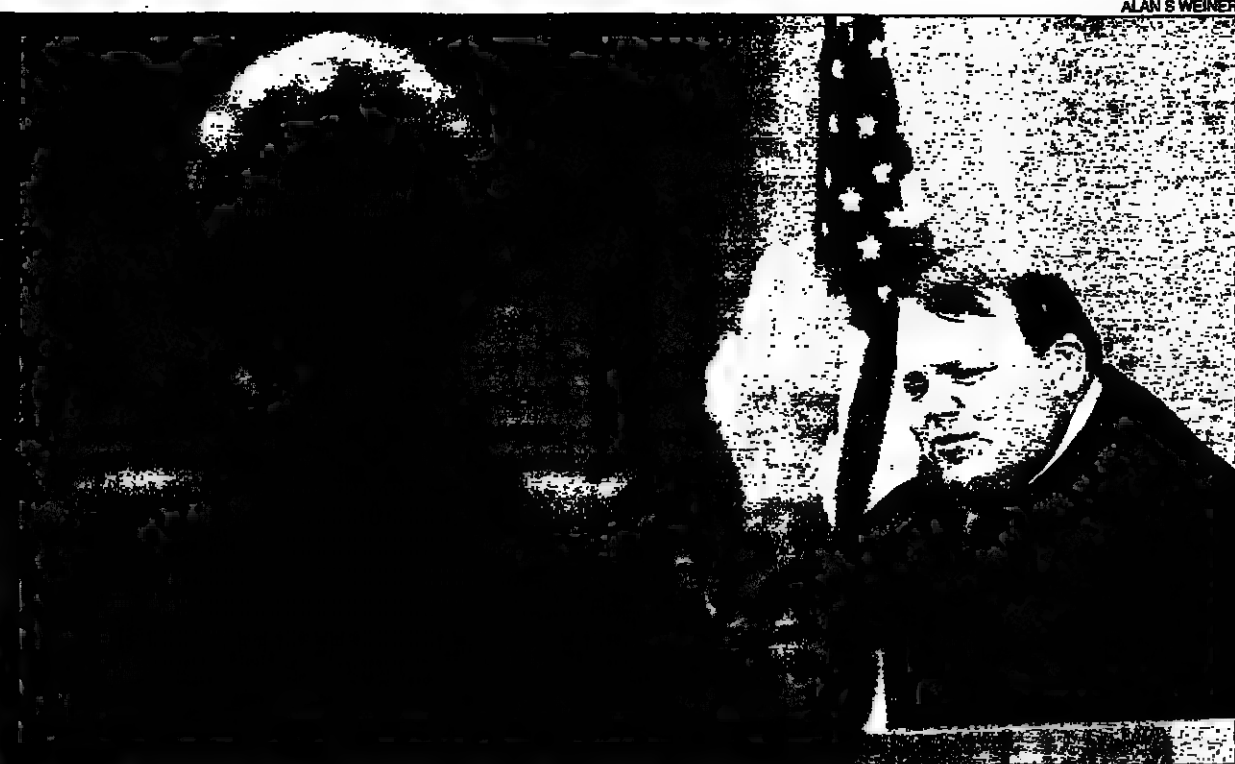
Sir John Fielding — the original blind judge

the sightless 18th-century Bow Street magistrate, Sir John Fielding, was reputed to know scores of London footpads simply from their voices. Judge Cothren, 47, shares that gift for vocal recognition, but the voices he hears are the draws of troubled Alabamians. Bessemer's crime rate is one of America's worst.

Judge Cothren, too, speaks with a slow, Southern delivery that lends sympathy to his judgments. But the theme of his verdicts is a steady self-discipline and a demand for individual responsibility. A divorcing couple, accompanied by the woman's mother, were rebuked for failing to put their small children first. "I want those little girls in church every Sunday," ordered the judge. "Yes, your honour," the trio mumbled, transfixed by his big frame and lopsided stare.

An out-of-work house painter, involved in a family dispute, tried to argue with the court. Judge Cothren returned his barrage with interest. "What I'm sayin' to you is this," he thundered. And the man quelled.

Over a lunchtime sandwich, he accepted sight can influence a judge — the witness who sweats and fidgets his collar, for instance, or the



Tony Cothren, the circuit court judge who metes out blind justice in Jefferson County, Alabama. He says a "sixth sense" helps him to determine the truthfulness of witnesses as they testify before him

firm-jawed dignity of a simple man wrongly accused. "Sometimes, to see the sorrow can be a wrong influence," he said. "Colleagues tell me there is nothing harder than looking into the tears of a woman and telling her that her home must be sold."

Blind eyes still shed tears, and the judge, sightless for 40

years, has been wounded by his opponents. "But I don't intend to let them beat me," he said. His example to other blind people has been much hailed. "There are only two things I would not want a blind person to do, and that's work on my brain or fly my airplane. Doggone it, we're just normal folks."

Normal, but sometimes extraordinary. Recently, a woman raised her right hand to take the oath, and left it swaying in the air. "Okay, ma'am, you can lower your hand now," said the judge.

For the rest of her testimony, the witness kept shooting glances at the judge, wondering what else he could see.

OWNERS of major league baseball clubs reluctantly accepted a collective bargaining agreement yesterday which finally ended four years of interminable conflict in the sport.

In a drastic reversal of their rejection only three weeks earlier, the owners paved the way for inter-league play, unprecedented revenue sharing between rich and poor clubs, and a search for a baseball commissioner.

The four-year agreement, still to be accepted by the players at a meeting in Puerto Rico next week, would also impose a luxury tax on club payrolls and allow baseball stars to become unrestricted free agents in the event of any strike.

Trouble began in 1992 when owners forced the then commissioner to resign and started a war with the players' union by advocating a salary cap. The result was a 234-day players' strike and a devastating knock to baseball's image.

Baseball clubs end four-year squabble

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

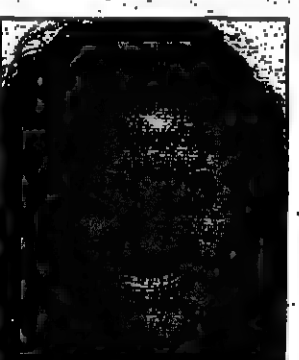
Simpson juror kicked out into Hollywood limelight

BY QUENTIN LETTS

AN ASPIRING actress and sometime television series "bikini girl" was booted off the O.J. Simpson case jury after failing to convince the judge that she was taking her duties seriously.

Ana-Marie Jamison, who promptly left the courthouse to tussle her hair in front of massed television cameras, denied that she was treating the case as a career-boosting lark. "I tried to be a fair and impartial juror," she said, after a change of outfit and a check to make sure that her profile was just right.

Hiroshi Fujisaki, the Superior Court Judge who is supervising the wrongful death suit court case against Mr. Simpson, lost his patience with the blonde, honey-tanned Miss Jamison after she passed a complimentary remark to a court technician about his tie.



Jamison told jury is not a social club

"A jury is not a social club," said Judge Fujisaki, a brisk, ascetic man who is making a very different fist of this case from the lenient Judge Ito, who ran the Simpson murder trial.

It was not the first impropriety from Miss Jamison, a sometime jewellery sales assistant who is said to be 25, looks older, but acts younger. During prosecution evidence she giggled when a lawyer referred to some Bruno Magli footwear as "ugly-ass shoes".

In the early stages of the case she was caught passing sweets to fellow jurors, and on another day she arrived wearing a T-shirt with the slogan "It's Halloween! Care to go bump in the night?"

Judge Fujisaki, announcing his decision to forego any future contribution from the blushing juror, said: "It is entirely likely that the public in general would lose confidence in the judicial process."

For Miss Jamison, banishment from the courthouse was a silver-lined cloud. In Hollywood, you grab opportunity wherever it passes. She has become an instant "name" across America and is assured a place in the index of future O.J. literature.

Florida sets free 500 criminals

New York: Almost 500 of Florida's nastiest criminals have been released this week after a court ruled that their sentences should be reduced for good behaviour (Our Correspondent writes).

The mass release of assorted killers, rapists and street toughs caused an outcry. Some Floridians feared that the "sunshine state" — a popular holiday destination for tourists — will suddenly become a more dangerous place.

Opponents of the release tried but failed to have it delayed before the matter was considered by the US Supreme Court. Instead, a state court ruled that the prisoners must be released under the provisions of a former good-behaviour rule.

Charlie Wells, a local sheriff, said 70 per cent of the convicts would offend again.

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20 BODY AND MIND

THE TIMES THURSDAY NOVEMBER 28 1996



Dr Thomas Stuttaford
on why an obsession
with constipation costs
taxpayers a fortune;
good news for well-
rounded women;
Kawasaki disease; how
vitamins can help
patients with angina

The natural way to stay healthy

Public analysts in Yorkshire reported this week that some mineral waters contained so much magnesium sulphate that they could be as laxative as a solution of Epsom salts.

The laxative action of mineral water should cause no surprise, for in earlier times mineral waters owed their popularity to their effect on the bowels. It is only recently that most patients and their doctors have not been obsessive in wanting a daily bowel action, and therefore inner cleanliness.

Even now, in some sections of society, colonic irrigation on a regular basis is considered necessary to supplement nature. The NHS drugs bill also shows that an appreciable proportion of the community consider that they have such severe constipation that it represents a clinical problem.

In a report in *Prescriber Magazine* Dr Kieran Moriarty and Dr Nuala O'Donoghue have analysed the public's demand for laxatives, and the present medical approach to constipation. Despite a more enlightened attitude to the bowels, the number of prescriptions paid for by the NHS has nearly doubled in the past ten years, constipation now costs the taxpayer more than £50 million a year. Many more bottles of laxative medicine are bought over the counter without a prescription.

People who are worried, but not so worried about their bowel movements that they need to take medically prescribed pills and potions, go to considerable trouble to keep regular by eating bran and other bulk-forming foods. There are other naturally occurring substances as well as bran which will draw fluid

into the large intestine: Normacol, which is made from mucilaginous gum, has a strong following, whereas others swear by Isphagula husk, Fybogel, and methylcellulose in the form of Celvace.

Choosing a higher fibre diet by eating, for instance, more baked beans, fruit, vegetables and wholemeal bread has much the same effect on the guts as some laxatives. It has the advantage that it is entirely natural, but the disadvantage that it can cause excessive wind and abdominal pain.

It is common for patients to be, quite rightly, concerned about a change in bowel habits, only for their fear to be allayed once it has become obvious that the change coincided with a sudden enthusiasm for high fibre foods.

Nor is it unusual to be consulted about constipation when in fact it is a consequence of nothing more sinister than a failure to drink ample amounts of fluid.

Constipation means different things to different people, but generally patients use the term to describe infrequent and irregular "evacuations". In medical parlance the diagnosis of simple constipation excludes this symptom when it is secondary to any other problem, whether this is a rare disease such as porphyria, which afflicted King George III, or various congenital abnormalities of the gut.

More commonly, irritable bowel syndrome and diverticulosis, are associated with constipation, but the possibility of a malignancy in the colon must always be considered when this symptom is present. In some cases constipation is secondary



Curves like Monroe's are fashionable again — and they can also be a sign of good health and long life

to drugs taken to treat other conditions. The treatment of simple constipation is necessary if the patient is suffering pain, or if they have underlying conditions which would be damaged by straining when going to the lavatory. Patients who have had a heart attack or stroke need to be spared excessive physical exertion which might accompany defecation. Others who suffer from chronic neurological diseases, such as multi-

ple sclerosis, may also need laxatives as a preventative, as do some elderly patients.

In its various forms senna has been a much prescribed laxative, and it is still favoured by obstetricians as constipation is a frequent complication of pregnancy. The senna was such a regular treatment 60 to 70 years ago that when my father moved house the first patient to see him after the move presented him with a senna

tree. Some patients become hooked on laxatives. Parents are blamed for this as the habit is thought to be laid down in childhood if the need for a daily bowel movement during the nursery years has been considered important.

Other people take excessive quantities of laxatives in order to lose weight, their overuse can give rise to all the problems associated with chronic diarrhoea.

Real women live longer

Dr Tim Spector and Dr Kathy Samaras, of the Twins Research Unit at St Thomas' Hospital, London, have checked countless women who have nicely rounded figures with amply developed breasts, buttocks and thighs.

Their research has shown that the traditional feminine shape of Marilyn Monroe and Sophia Loren is healthier — and more often associated with longevity — than the fashionable stick-like figure, or even an athletic build.

The fundamental lesson learnt from the research into obesity is that fat stored around the waistline leads to an increased risk of high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease, whereas when it is carried around the thighs, buttocks and breasts it is not associated with these diseases. The plaintive cry of the curvaceous woman that she can never lose the fat from her thighs is misplaced, as storing fat in this way may be lifesaving. Fat stored around the waist is much more mobile and, when in transit in the blood stream, has the opportunity to damage the blood vessels.

One conclusion from the work at St Thomas' is that the tendency of men to carry their weight in the middle — a "beer belly" — is one of the reasons why they have traditionally had a higher incidence of heart problems. Post-menopausal women now have a similar rate of heart disease to men, but women in this age group are also likely to have an expanding waistband.

A committee of doctors have recently been studying obesity in Scotland and their guidelines have been endorsed by the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh and reported in the *British Medical Journal*. Their approved guidelines for weight loss anticipate research at St Thomas' and suggests that neither sex should be encouraged to feel they have to be svelte. An overweight patient's first aim should be to stop putting on weight, then lose modest amounts in short dieting sessions. After some weight has been lost the diet should be temporarily relaxed so that the body can readjust itself before dieting is resumed. The usual medical advice is to aim to lose not more than 2lb in a week.

The Scottish doctors also suggest that treatment has to be directed at the whole family — household eating patterns may cause all of the members to be overweight.

One very controversial recommendation is that it can be medically desirable to use appetite suppressants in the long term. For many years it has been thought that such pills should not be used for more than three months at a time for fear of inducing addiction and affecting the general health.

Suppressants should be avoided in patients who have a history of epilepsy, or in those who are taking some forms of antidepressant. All appetite-suppressant drugs affect the sleep pattern. It is not certain whether it is this characteristic which can worsen symptoms of depression, or schizophrenia, or whether it is a feature of the drug itself.

Neither sex should feel obliged to be too svelte

Fatty food may trigger angina

MANY years ago my dentist told me that the amount of fat in his diet affected his angina. If the dentist had taken cream with his porridge, followed by bacon and eggs and butter on his toast, it required only a mildly irritating patient to induce chest tightness and a pain down his left arm. Conversely, a breakfast of equal caloric value but low in fat allowed him to see the most troublesome of patients without a twinge. We discussed the possibility that his symptoms represented a description of post-prandial angina, but he insisted that it was fat which gave him chest pain.

A recent report in *Doctor Magazine*, years after his death, provides support for the dentist's observations. Researchers at the University of

Maryland medical centre in Baltimore gave volunteers a 900-calorie meal, 50 per cent of which was saturated fat. Their blood vessels' ability to dilate after the meal were reduced by 70 per cent. When the volunteers took a gram of vitamin C and 800 international units of vitamin E before a high fat meal, this reduction was 17 per cent.

The dentist was right. Fat was inhibiting the capability of his coronary arteries to dilate. The amount of supplementary vitamins taken in pill form is greater than could be derived from orange juice or other vitamin-rich dietary sources. The Maryland research is further evidence that it is worthwhile for patients with angina to take additional vitamins.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

HAS PORNOGRAPHY KILLED OFF SMUT?
Bryan Appleyard, in *The Culture* this weekend

PLUS: CHRISTMAS BOOKS
Part two of our festive guide includes the pick of the year's children's books, biographies, thrillers and rock music

THE SUNDAY TIMES /S/ THE SUNDAY PAPERS

Panorama starts a scare among GPs

THE *Panorama* programme on Kawasaki disease has caused strife among family doctors. The Royal College of General Practitioners has recommended that any GP treating a child with Kawasaki disease-like symptoms should call in a consultant paediatrician. Doctors have written to *Doctor Magazine*, claiming the policy would result in "thousands and thousands" of children being admitted to hospital unnecessarily.

Kawasaki disease was first described in Japan 30 years ago. Although rare, it is fatal in 2 per cent of patients, who are usually aged between two months and five.

Kawasaki disease starts with flu-like symptoms, usually with a temperature of about 102°F. The patient develops a rash like that of scarlet fever, which is most pronounced over the trunk and abdomen, particularly around the genitalia. The patient has a dry mouth, sore throat, swollen neck glands, bright red tongue and peeling skin. The child may complain of swollen, painful joints. Less commonly, the patient may have jaundice and pneumonia.

The most serious aspect of the disease is a polyarteritis, inflammation of the arteries. Patients can die of a heart attack, or inflammation of the heart muscle. Heart attacks may not occur until several years later. Standard treatment is heavy doses of aspirin.

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Closing a window on America

Magnus Linklater laments the end of the Harkness ideal

Quietly, and with no formal announcement, an excellent British-American institution is coming to an end. The Harkness Fellowships, which for more than 70 years have given people in Britain the opportunity to spend time in the United States, absorbing the culture and conventions of the American way of life, are being scrapped in favour of a programme tailored to "domestic priorities in the USA". It is a great loss. The idea was born out of the sort of genuine, disinterested philanthropy, the benefits of which can never be accurately measured, but it has probably done more to improve understanding between two cultures than any amount of trumpeting about a special relationship.

The list of former Harkness Fellows is remarkable for its diversity: politicians such as Peter Brooke and Jack Ashley, civil servants including Sir Douglas Wass and Howard Davies, and the businessmen Roger Salmon, who carried out the rail franchising programme, and Lord Ruxton of Duxford. There were writers and journalists too: William Shawcross, Alastair Burnet, Hugo Young, Hugh Stephenson, Bridget Kendall, Julia Newberger, Bamber Gascoigne: the architect Terry Farrell, the lawyer Lord Lester of Herne Hill, and, reaching further back, that icon of Anglo-American relations, Alistair Cooke.

They were chosen by assessors of the stature of Oliver Franks, Noel Annan and Isaiah Berlin, simply on the basis that they were talented enough to bring back something of value, both for themselves and for public life.

All of the hundreds of fellows benefited from an extraordinary luxury: two years spent travelling in America, studying at different universities, learning about American politics or business — anything, as its British director William Plowden once said, from "Cajun music to management techniques". Hugo Young described it as "a better education than Oxford", and one that stayed with him for 30 years. The fellows had an enviable freedom to plan their own programmes, and were not expected to produce anything as taxing as a report at the end of it. Their contribution to transatlantic relations was, in effect, themselves.

My father, Eric Linklater, who was one of the earliest recipients, in 1939, travelled from coast to coast with, among others, Dick White, who went on to head M16. He described it as "two years of liberty in the vast morning of America", and his novel *Juan in America* was the comic end-product of an odyssey across the continent at a time when Calvin Coolidge was President and Al Capone ruled Chicago.

In 1990, the Commonwealth Fund, which administers the fellowships, decided that they should be cut back to a year and aimed principally at promising young people in mid-career who might be judged the leaders of the

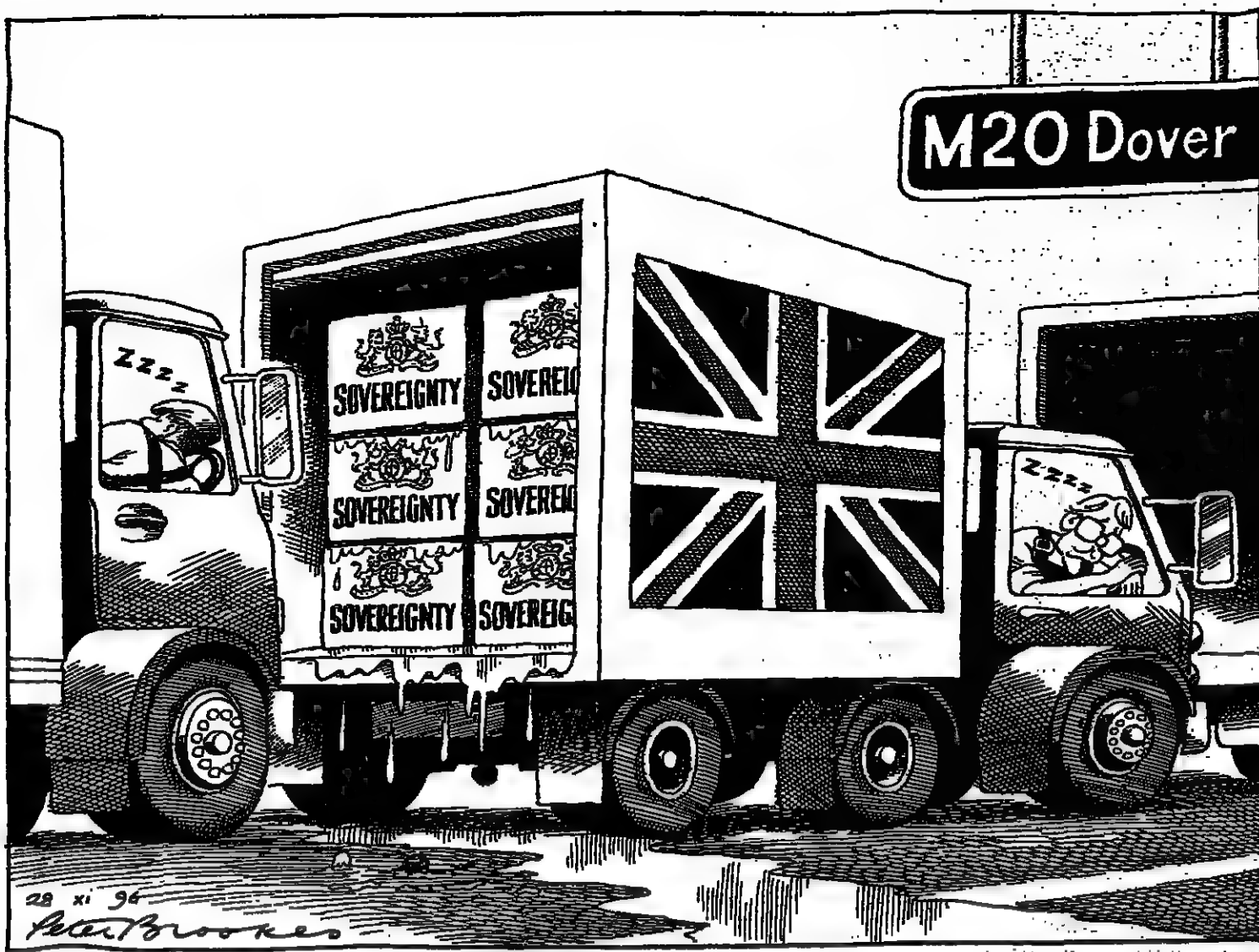
future. Their work programmes were more carefully "focused", and there was a new concentration on the professions. Nevertheless, the scheme continued to be invaluable to both countries. One of those who benefited was David Bell, who went on to become chief education officer for Newcastle-on-Tyne. "The value from a professional perspective", he wrote, "is that it allows one to see this country through the eyes of another system." Americans welcomed the Brits who crossed the Atlantic in rather the same way as Rhodes Scholars were appreciated at British universities. So much so that to mark President Clinton's visit to Britain in 1994, John Major announced the establishment of the Atlantic Fellowship, a sort of Harkness-in-reverse for rising American stars.

Now, however, the Harkness vision has been sacrificed to the gods of political correctness and the American domestic programme. Instead of cross-cultural fertilisation, the Harkness will in future be restricted to specialists in healthcare, who will be judged on whether they have anything to contribute to American programmes such as "Bettering the Health of Minority Americans" and "Advancing the Wellbeing of Elderly People". The changes rule out anything of more general interest, such as public management, criminal justice or even education. The Harkness concept has, in effect, died.

The reason is not financial. The Commonwealth Fund, established in 1918 by Anna Harkness, a wealthy New Yorker whose family had come originally from Lanarkshire and whose wealth flowed from oil, remains immensely rich. Mrs Harkness decreed simply that it be used for "the common good", and her son Edward, who set up the fellowships, insisted that they should enhance the lives of those chosen and improve understanding between the two countries.

The new changes, which decree that the 1997-98 fellowships will be the last of their kind, stem from a view in New York that the fund's resources should be used to benefit American needs rather than British careers. Some see this as an example of growing American isolationism, but it looks as if it has more to do with a hard-headed approach to funding which seeks to quantify gain and measure achievement, rather than leaving it to chance and the hazard of human nature.

Do they really believe that an approach to learning which aims to enrich rather than to shape a career has become irrelevant? Perhaps, as the Harkness directors argue, there are other opportunities for young British hopefuls to cross the Atlantic. But I cannot help feeling that we are losing something important. This may indeed be the age of the specialist, but to anyone of vision and ambition, the freedom to roam "the vast morning of America" remains a priceless opportunity.



Small print, big stakes

John Redwood urges Kenneth Clarke to protect our economic autonomy

The Chancellor and his colleagues will be negotiating momentous issues at the European Council of Finance Ministers on Monday. They will discuss how the budgets of member states joining the single currency will be controlled and a new exchange-rate mechanism for the countries outside the European single currency. They will discuss additional powers allowing the European Union to coordinate, monitor and strongly influence the budgetary positions of all member states. They will discuss a completely new single currency to replace the ecu of the original treaty.

It has always been my wish that Britain should have an important influence on these debates. I know few who wish to see the United Kingdom storm out and refuse to negotiate. I know of no one who wishes us to marginalise ourselves. As one of the principal contributors to the EU budget, it is important that Britain speak with a strong and clear voice about what we want for ourselves and about what system would be best for our partners. The debate this week in Parliament has not been between those who want us to have nothing to do with it and those who wish us to influence it. The debate has been about how we can best exert influence and what kind of influence it should be.

The Council's regulation strengthening the surveillance and co-ordination of budgetary positions has caused concern. The official European line is that there is nothing to worry about. We are told that we and other countries already provide figures so that the EU can monitor developments. We are told that this new regulation is in the same spirit. Britain should ask why it is necessary to strengthen budgetary surveillance and co-ordination of countries not inside the single currency. If all that this regulation proposes is what we are doing already, then there is no need for it at all. If the idea is that stronger surveillance and co-ordination are needed only for those joining the single currency, then the document should make that clear.

It would be possible for the European Court to rule against a state outside the single currency and to impose a fine for failing to meet the requirements of the convergence and budgetary programmes. Recital 13 says: "It will also be necessary to make similar rules covering the

programmes and surveillance of the other member states." If those outside the euro are to be free of any additional burdens, why do we need this recital at all? Wouldn't it be wisest for the British Government to urge that this recital be struck out, so as to confirm the assurance that Brussels will not seek to control our economy by the back door? The document on a new exchange-rate mechanism warns that "the Council and Commission would exploit to the maximum the surveillance procedures provided for under Article 103 of the treaty". It sets out a requirement for

Unfortunately, the ecu has continuously fallen in value against the mark. This has led German politicians to fear an even bigger backlash from the German people, faced with abolition of their currency. Germans do not want a weaker currency.

The decision to "rename" the currency the "euro" is more fundamental than a mere change of name. It represents a complete change of tack on how the single currency is to be brought about. The original idea was to narrow and narrow the trading bands of the exchange-rate mechanism until the currencies were closely aligned. It was then to be a relatively easy step to replace the individual trading currencies by a basket of them, the ecu. The ecu basket was based on most of the members' currencies, weighted by their national incomes. It was a carefully contrived plan, built up over many years. It was

effectively destroyed by the collapse of the exchange-rate mechanism.

The regulations now put forward are an attempt to make the euro legal when there is no basis for its introduction in any treaty. Article 2 makes clear the scope of the change: "As from 1999 every reference in a legal instrument to ecu as referred to in Article 109G of the treaty and as defined in council regulation EC No 3320/94 is replaced by a reference to the euro at a rate of one euro to one ecu." The regulation repeals the offending Council regulation that defines the ecu, because the EU fears that people might continue to use it or calculate it. One of the recitals to the document states: "The ecu will cease to be defined as a basket component of currencies on the First of January 1999."

Britain should point out that while this regulation can legalise all contracts within the EU, it cannot apply beyond the 15 member states. Recital 8 reveals the legal confusion at the heart of the new currency when it states: "Explicit confirmation of the

principle of continuity will also contribute to the recognition of continuity of contracts in the jurisdiction of third countries." The truth is that compulsorily replacing contracts in marks, francs and even pounds with euro contracts on the basis of a regulation directly applicable only to the 15 member states may result in legal challenges around the world. European lawyers are beginning to worry that they will need similar regulations in every major jurisdiction around the world in order to regularise the contractual position outside the EU.

There is another more fundamental issue, concerning democracy. If the member states had wanted a currency called the euro and had not wanted to carry on with the basket currency, they would have said so in the Maastricht treaty. That treaty had to be approved and ratified by referendums in countries such as France and Denmark, and by strong parliamentary scrutiny in Britain. This new regulation — if it goes ahead — will receive little or no attention in most member states, and yet it is a crucial revision to the single currency scheme. The correct legal and democratic way to proceed would be to amend the treaty.

Jurisdictions outside the Community are more likely to accept the legality of the euro if the treaty has been properly amended. As long as the big gap remains between what the treaty says and what the regulations say, there is scope for lawyers outside Europe to stir up complaints among those who think they have lost out from compulsory conversion from the mark or franc to the euro.

Britain should insist that the EU impose no new obligations on countries that do not join the single currency. The current scheme for stabilising economies inside the single currency would impose new obligations, so we should propose changes. And because the legal uncertainty around the euro is so great, we should insist that if the EU wishes to change its single currency scheme so comprehensively, it must do so by treaty amendment and not by backstairs regulation. Britain has a very strong hand in all this. Our financial expertise is respected. We have a veto over two of these proposals. We must use it constructively to protect our national interest. We owe it to our partners to limit the damage to countries joining the single currency.

The case for free museums

Isabel Carlisle

on the price we pay for entry fees

Now that the pattern of government allocation of funds to national museums and galleries has been revealed for the next financial year, it is clear that the Government intends to end the principle of free admission. The Budget figures show that grants for museums which already charged for entry either remain unchanged or have increased. Free museums, on the other hand, have sustained big cuts: the British Museum grant is down by £1.3 million. Its trustees meet on December 7 to discuss entry fees, among other solutions to its financial plight. Other bastions of free entry — the National Gallery, the Tate Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery — are clearly being pressed to introduce charges.

How apathetic it is to greet this as inevitable and how wrong-headed to say that all those great continental collections charge for entry — the Louvre, the Uffizi, the Rijksmuseum — and ask why it shouldn't happen here. Across Europe, museums and galleries have become predominantly tourist attractions: the taxpayers don't use their local museums, tourists do. The visitors are no longer owners, they are customers.

Our free museums are different. When they were founded the British Museum was the first, in 1753 it was intended that through free access everyone would have the chance to build that special relationship with the collections that comes only through frequent visits. Gifts of paintings, antiquities, African sculpture and much else were made on the understanding that the museums were free and would remain so.

Free access means that people visit their local and national collections — and visit them often. Of visitors to the Tate, 40 per cent come from abroad, 40 per cent from outside London. The remaining 20 per cent are from London itself, and very many are frequent visitors. National Gallery visitors are roughly half-and-half, British residents and foreign visitors, with the highest proportion of nationals to visit any picture collection in Europe. This is not to say that tourists don't visit our national collections. They do, and they come in very large numbers because our museums are world-class and they are free. But far more Londoners visit London museums than Parisians visit the Louvre, or Florentines visit the Uffizi.

The solution to the present crisis does not lie entirely with the Treasury. There is no doubt that museums should be trying to raise as much money as they can to supplement their grants-in-aid. Charging, however, makes this much more difficult. With an estimated drop of around 50 per cent in visitors on the introduction of charging, it is uncertain whether in the long run there is a real financial gain. (The V&A had 1,733,300 visitors in 1985; after the introduction of a small Gallery charge that year, numbers fell to 916,500 in 1987.) Fewer visitors mean a loss in revenue to shops and restaurants within the museums.

Museums would also lose gifts from sponsors and patrons. In 1992, Sir Joseph Hotting gave £2 million for the large gallery of Oriental art named after him in the British Museum because it has free entrance. Heinz Berggruen gave his Seurat oil sketches, worth £7-£10 million, to the National Gallery earlier this year because it has free entrance.

Further revenue would be lost by museums because it becomes untenable to charge separately for temporary exhibitions if there is already an entrance charge to get into a museum. (See the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, discovered.) Sponsorship for exhibitions is also harder to attract with fewer visitors. Divide the figure for a museum's grant-in-aid by the number of visitors and you will find that the figures for government subsidy per head in museums that charge as opposed to those that are free shows a dramatically less efficient use of taxpayers' money. At the moment the cost per visitor is £4.50 at the National Gallery, £5.35 at the British Museum and £6 at the Tate, as against £17 at the Natural History Museum and £25.50 at the V&A.

If we don't think it matters that museums are forced into charging, that paintings may no longer be a universally available source of visual solace or pleasure or learning, or spiritual food in an age of declining religious belief, then what has happened to us as a nation? Is it part of our moral malaise that the great British national inheritance of regular free access to museums is no longer an urgent political issue? The Labour Party says it supports the principle of free entry, but has published no detailed proposals on the subject. The Conservatives profess to believe in extending access, but their policy of cutting grants and forcing entry charges seems likely to have the opposite effect.

During the last war, more than 12,000 people came to see Bonicelli's *Mystic Nativity* in just 18 days, risking destruction in the Blitz, when, brought back to the National Gallery as a picture of the Month. It is just one example of the special relationship that the British public has with its collections. We are very close to seeing that relationship destroyed.

Duty done

WEALTH and age have done little to diminish Baroness Thatcher's eye for a bargain, as she showed at the House of Lords' gift shop yesterday lunchtime. She was buying a couple of cases of Scotch, to be sent out as Christmas presents, when she spotted that the bottles — at £12.75 each — had not been reduced by 26p, as the Chancellor decreed they should be in Tuesday's Budget. Her privet hair quivering, she demanded the discount.

"This is old stock," pleaded the staff. "We cannot reduce the tax once it has been put on." "That's your problem," replied Lady T. "You can claim it back. Get on to the Treasury, if you must, call the Chancellor's office and tell them I'm causing merry hell. You're trying to overcharge me."

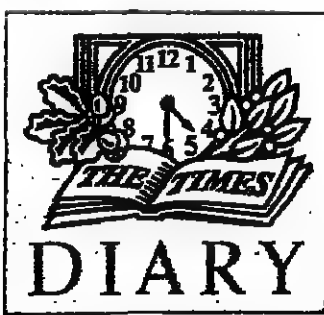
Enter Mr Bibbiani, Superintendent of the Refreshment Department. "It is not our policy to reduce tax on old stock," he said tersely, "but because of the size of Lady Thatcher's order, we decided to take off the 26p on each bottle as a nice gesture. We did not do it because it was Lady Thatcher..." According to one onlooker, the former Prime Minister looked

agitated, but "in a controlled sort of way". When she received her discount, however, a big "just taken the Falklands" sort of smile spread wide across her face.

Yesterday's announcement of the engagement of the Earl of Ronaldshay, elder son of the Marquess of Zetland, to Heather Hoffman will have gone down particularly well at Clarence House. Ronaldshay is the supplier of sausages by appointment to the Queen Mother. He delivers them



That's the spirit



in person from his sausage company Musks, appearing at the tradesmen's entrance with his small package wrapped in waxed paper. Apparently they go very well with Dubonnet.

Dance on

TEA DANCES on a Sunday are the latest subject of contention in the House of Lords. Nearly 200 years after the Sunday Observance Act of 1780 banned owners of saloons from charging clients who want to dance on their premises, a Private Member's Bill is to be introduced to bring merriment to the floor of the House.

Leading with his feet is Viscount Astor, who will introduce the Bill, claimed by its supporters to rid Britain of the last vestige of the 1780 Act. "We now have betting on

a Sunday, shopping on a Sunday and flexible licensing hours on a Sunday," said one dance club owner. "We should also have dancing on a Sunday."

Lord Soper, a nonagenarian Methodist minister, is also behind the move. "I do not dance much myself, but I am of the opinion that any of the arts can be conserved," he says. "Though I draw the line at the cruder forms of jazz dancing. Too suggestive."

Chaos at the Treasury yesterday after the Budget. Despite the excess of information prior to the



"I'm in a vast lorry park — called Kent"

Chancellor's delivery, nobody could get hold of the details afterwards. City companies had paid £48 up-front for each copy. One firm had 80 motorcycle couriers lined up to distribute copies to clients, and hundreds more queued for their copies to no avail. The shambles was resolved only when the Central Office of Information admitted that it hadn't enough copies to go round. Apologies all round, and promises of refunds.

Swank swank

MODESTY wasn't the strong suit of Liberal Democrat Menzies Campbell at the Spectator Parliamentary of the Year awards yesterday at the Savoy, where he received a commendation as the "Member to watch".

He reminded lunchers of another award he once won, of which he was inordinately proud. "I beat O.J. Simpson years ago in a 60-yard race," he reminisced. "It was an act of quite remarkable and unremitting bravery."

Close enough

AFTER months of headscarves and ostentatious hat-wearing, Princess Caroline of Monaco, 39, has come clean and is showing off



Graceful Caroline

her cool-bald head. She shaved it earlier this year to a slew of rumours that she might be receiving treatment for cancer or simply suffering from alopecia.

Now she is making a virtue of it, as in this photograph by François-Marie Banier, whose first collection of photos, *Past and Present*, has just appeared. The pose gives a good show to Caroline's neck, a feature she shares with her mother, Grace Kelly.

P.H.S



MORNING AFTER

When the Budget turns to councils, cuts and unaccountability

After the grandeur of the annual Budget comes the wrangling of its distribution. Recipients of largesse parade their ingratitude, claiming that the spending increase is in fact a cut. Those who have suffered real cuts in public spending wave their shrouds. Nowhere is this more apparent than in local government, whose division of the booty comes the morning after the day before.

Yesterday, as the ritual came round again, Sir Jeremy Beecham, representing three local authority associations, painted lurid pictures of potholed roads, children languishing in bed and breakfast hostels, and soaring class sizes. He predicted that council taxes would rise on average by 6 per cent, twice the rate of inflation, eating up most of the Chancellor's income tax cuts. Inevitably, he blamed Mr Clarke: "People have rumbled who is responsible for increasing levels of local tax every year. They accept that the burden on local authorities is not self-inflicted, and that the responsibility lies with central government."

Much as this trust army ministers, it is substantially true. Seventeen years of gathering power to the centre have stripped local councils of authority, discretion and tax-raising responsibility. Central government now controls more than 80 per cent of town hall spending, compared with just 40 per cent as recently as 1984. Thus, if councils want more money, they have to increase the council tax proportionately by a factor of five times more than if they had total control of their revenues.

Yet they do not even have the freedom to do what they want with the council tax. It is still capped — which curiously encourages high spending. Almost all councils now spend right up to the level of their cap. Moreover, capping has made a nonsense of local accountability. Local residents should be allowed to choose whether they want to pay high levels of council tax for better services, or the reverse. Any party that spent

too much or wasted the money could be thrown out at the subsequent election.

In America, the freedom of states to raise their own money and experiment with new ideas has produced a ferment of policy initiatives. New thinking, whether on crime or education or inner-city revival, is quickly disseminated. What works in one state is adopted in others. When local governments become too free with taxpayers' money, as in California in the 1970s, voters revolt.

Such diversity has been stamped out in Britain, much to the detriment of the political culture. For centralisation has a human cost too. Traditionally, party activists were drawn from the thriving pool of local politics. Many senior national politicians first started political life as councillors. Fewer party members can now be bothered to join organisations which have become so emasculated.

The result, as was evident yesterday, is that central government wins little of the credit for local successes, but shoulders most of the blame for their failures. Council tax goes up? Classes are too large? Libraries are shut? Blame John Gummer. The public perceives little difference between the uniform business rate, which is set centrally, and the council tax.

There is little prospect of improvement even if Labour were to win the election. After the poll tax and the council tax, the capping and phasing of the past few years, there is scant public acceptability for further reforms. For all its talk of reviving local civic government, Labour still intends to retain "reserve powers in extreme cases" to cap the council tax. Its proposal to put a quarter of local councillors up for election each year would help to improve accountability. Directly elected mayors could restore a little local pride. But a substantial restoration of revenue-raising powers to councils would be anathema as much to Tony Blair as it was to Margaret Thatcher.

CHRISTIAN UNION

An historic moment for the churches of Europe

For more than 450 years Europe's Christians have been divided both between Roman Catholic and Protestant and among Protestants themselves. At many times that division has had bloody consequences. Even in peace the palpable fragmentation of Christ's One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church has served to weaken the message of the Gospel: this has been especially so in a continent and a century where secularism has run rife, agnosticism taken root, atheism advanced, and the State has moved remorselessly into terrain once properly considered the domain of faith.

Today the Church of England is to endorse the Porvoo agreement, a mutual compact between the Anglican and Lutheran Churches of the British Isles and virtually all Nordic and Baltic nations. This will mark the most significant step towards reunification since the Reformation. The General Synod will first give its backing; then a formal signing will take place during a Eucharist at Westminster Abbey attended by the Queen.

The Porvoo declaration establishes a new ten-member Anglican-Lutheran alliance of churches stretching across Northern Europe from Iceland to Estonia. It holds out the promise of unparalleled co-operation between groups whose theological similarity has often been masked by differences in organisational structure.

This agreement is of sizeable practical as well as symbolic value. The denominations are pledged to welcome one another's members, to receive sacramental and other pastoral ministrations and to regard those baptised in any one national body as part of their own congregation. Furthermore, those

who serve as bishop, priest, or deacon in one faith will be eligible to enter the ministry of any other Church covered by the Porvoo understanding. Since the Church of England suffers from a weak supply of clergy while many Scandinavian countries do not, the arrival of additional pastors from abroad is a real possibility.

The drive for greater ecumenicalism has not been easy. The issue is always controversial within Churches as well as across them. The various attempts made by Anglicans over the past 25 years to establish common cause with Methodists never reached full fruition. In the 1980s Archbishop Robert Runcie made enormous efforts to forge closer ties with the Roman Catholic and Orthodox faiths. While there was a valuable movement towards better mutual understanding, more ambitious plans for genuine convergence fell foul of doctrinal disputes, not least the question of women priests. By reaching out to the smaller but much more similar Lutheran Churches, a more practical approach has been taken and one that has already proved rewarding.

Porvoo should not, however, be seen as an alternative to wider reconciliation. That remains the objective, but church leaders have wisely recognised the need to build ecumenicalism block by block. A road to Rome cannot be built in a day. With the exceptions of Denmark and Latvia (temporary, we hope), the vast majority of Anglicans and Lutherans will be in common communion and community. In a Europe where practising Christians have come often to see themselves as a marginalised minority, the new unity signified by the Porvoo accord can only be a power for good.

OF MICE AND TUNA

Drastic measures for streetwise rodents

Gangs of youngsters rampage through the grey concrete and steel city centre of Birmingham. The authorities are both annoyed and baffled: there appears to be no solution to the problem. Attempts to use both carrots and sticks to control the problem are plainly a failure. When offenders are caught, they are violent and difficult to handle. When imprisoned they suffer acute stress and occasionally die.

As with people, so with mice. The plague which afflicted Britain's proud second city was not of maladjusted human beings but of rodents. The mice who streamed through the cinemas, restaurants and shops of the Bull Ring Centre in Birmingham were so streetwise, canny and hard to catch that they may teach us useful things about the genetic evolution of the mouse, and perhaps about other species. Scientists have long known of the strong biological similarities between men and mice. One school of thought believes that a common ancestor of both species lived about 70 million years ago.

The mean mice of the Midlands perfectly illustrate "Red Queen" theories of evolution. Species and their genes evolve in a permanent race with rivals and enemies, developing protections and weapons against predators and competitors. The solution of one problem is always followed by a threat from another quarter. As the Red Queen tells Alice: "It takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place."

The scientists charged with solving Bir-

mingham's infestation know what she meant: they must have begun to worry that the mice they were trying to eliminate had evolved to a point where the balance of power between human beings and mice had been permanently upset. Nothing seemed to work. A hapless postgraduate was set to work catching them: he caught only a handful and made an alarming discovery. Captured mice were such tightly-coiled urban guerrillas that they went frantic. Several died from the sheer stress of being confined. Mice at liberty bypassed the traps, would not touch poisonous bait or else ate it, burped happily and suffered no ill-effects.

The city mice were compared to "bumkin" mice caught on Berkshire farms. The country cousins were not equipped to prosper in the urban jungle: they walked straight into the traps, ate poisoned cereal and keeled over. The dilemma was finally solved by poisoning the one food the trap-shy mice could not resist: tuna fish. The scientific jury is still out on why they went for the item which features so frequently on the menus of health-conscious human beings. One expert speculates that their yen for protein may be traced back to a taste for eating rubbish outside hamburger joints.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said that the world would beat a path to the door of the man who made a better mousetrap. The days of springs, wire and morsels of cheese have gone for ever. Mousetrap designers these days need PhDs.

Challenge to Nato command system

From Field Marshal Lord Carver

Sir, The solution to the current disagreement between the US and France over the reorganisation of Nato's integrated commands (report, November 23) lies in the proposal which I have been advocating for several years. It is that all Nato's integrated commands should be abolished. They were not envisaged when the North Atlantic Alliance was originated, and not formed until some time after the treaty was signed.

Instead I propose that US forces stationed in Europe or its surrounding waters should be solely under US national command and that within the North Atlantic Alliance a European operational and training command should be formed, with subordinate land, air and naval commands, incorporating the forces of those European members of the Alliance who wished to join it.

It would be essential that Britain, France and Germany were members. The forces of those members of the Alliance who did not wish to join would remain under national command, associating themselves with it through the Alliance's military committee, whose chairman should always be American.

The dismantlement of the Nato command system would not involve any alteration to the North Atlantic Treaty. Members of the Alliance would have to accept that, if their forces were involved in operations, in Europe or elsewhere, in which US forces also participated, they would have to operate under overall US command, whether through my proposed European Command or separately.

This was the case in Korea and the Gulf. It is the case now in Bosnia, and would have been, in reality, if Nato had ever had to implement any of its emergency defence plans.

If members are involved in operations in which the US does not participate the European Command which I propose would provide the command element, backed if necessary by the sort of support from the US military infrastructure which is already proposed for a Nato combined joint task force.

I can see no reason why my proposal should not be acceptable to the US, to France and to other members of the Alliance, although no doubt HM Government would shrink from the idea of anything that smacked of an independent European structure, even though it was within the North Atlantic Alliance.

Yours truly,
LORD CARVER
(Author, *Tightrope Walking: British Defence Policy Since 1945*, Hutchinson, 1992),
House of Lords,
November 23.

Hitting a wrong note

From Captain P. R. D. Kimm, RN (ret)

Sir, Cardinal Ratzinger's condemnation on St Cecilia's Day of heavy metal (report, November 23) is particularly topical in Britain today, as we seek to reverse the trend to violence in our society and to control juvenile crime. One does not have to be a theologian to recognise that such "music" breathes aggression and rebellion.

Perhaps it takes a cardinal to say as much, for it would require great political courage to speak out against a culture with so large a following and against so powerful an industry.

On the other hand, the current vogue for plain chant and similar quiet music must not be forgotten, for it reveals a deep need in our hectic society for calm and tranquillity; and perhaps there are more voices "in green pastures and beside still waters" than might at first be thought.

Yours faithfully,
PETER KIMM,
69 New Brighton Road,
Emsworth, Hampshire,
November 23.

Tribute to Governor

From the Deputy Governor of Bermuda

Sir, It is misleading to suggest, as does your *Diary* (November 23), that the people of Bermuda "almost declared independence on account of [Lord Waddington's] governance" here. HM Government's policy, which the Governor has always reflected, is that it is entirely up to the people of Bermuda to decide whether they want independence or not.

Bermuda did not "almost declare independence" in the August 1995 referendum. In answer to the question, "Are you in favour of Independence for Bermuda?", 25.6 per cent voted "Yes" and 74.4 per cent voted "No".

In the interest of accuracy your readers might wish to be aware of the statement made in the House of Assembly by the Home Affairs Minister on November 15: Lord Waddington is the best Governor we have had. He and his wife have been tremendous at supporting programmes in the private sector that have benefited this country and they have been tremendous in supporting Government and the Opposition.

The Shadow Minister associated himself with that statement.

Yours faithfully,
P. WILLIS,
Deputy Governor's Office,
Government House, Bermuda,
November 23.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5600

Implications of introducing charges for museum entry

From the Master of the Royal Armouries

Sir, I sympathise with the plight of the British Museum (Arts, November 6 letters, November 21, 25) and agree that it needs help, but it is not alone. All our national museums need assistance.

The question of charging is a difficult one, but in the end, somehow, if we value museums we must pay for them.

Charges are made for admittance to all three sites on which the Royal Armouries operates, though on only one (Fort Nelson) does the income go to the museum. This allows us to operate (but only just) on a government subsidy of only about £1.20 per visitor, considerably below the British Museum's £5 to £5.50, which it claims makes it the cheapest after the National Gallery.

The important thing is not to bandy statistics about but to press for greater help for all our major museums to allow them better to serve their public and the whole community.

Yours etc,
G. M. WILSON,
Master of the Royal Armouries,
Armouries Drive,
Leeds, West Yorkshire,
November 25.

From Professor E. C. Fernie,
Director, Courtauld Institute of Art

Sir, The strongest argument for admission charges at the British Museum is the number of foreign visitors it attracts: while its contents make it the most internationally important of our great collections there is no overriding reason why British taxpayers should meet this particular charge.

In practice, however, it is impossible to distinguish such visitors from others, so that charges for them would mean charges for all, and the arguments against charges for citizens of this country are powerful and worthy of repetition.

1. They will deter the less well off and the young, especially those not eligible for student concessions.
2. They will deter those who make short and frequent visits.
3. After the drop in donations and the

Occupied Jersey

From Mrs B. A. Milton

Sir, Having lived through the German occupation of Jersey may I counter the allegation of an informant (report, November 20, also letter, November 22):

The behaviour of a great number of women had been quite disgraceful. There are many illegitimate children on the island born of German fathers. The Westway cliche on Royal Parade is full of the little bastards.

I was a staff nurse and sister in the cliche throughout the war and the number of children rose from about 45 before the war to a maximum of 63. All children were registered as British nationals and treated as such. It is my personal opinion that only a small minority of these children had German fathers.

Monetary union

From Mr M. C. Kennedy

Sir, Government bonds are not, as Professor Ralston (letter, November 21) contends, a "creative" way of avoiding budget imbalance, but the principal method by which governments finance their existing budget imbalances.

If the UK were constitutionally obliged, like certain states in the United States to balance its budget year by year the effect would be to magnify the size of business downturns. This is because the fall in government revenues which accompanies any fall in incomes would have to be matched by equally large cuts in government spending, thus causing further job losses, a further fall in income and consumption.

Going to St Ives

From Mr Viv Cothey

Sir, Mr Michael Knight (letter, November 23) is quite correct that historically the Cornish town name was not spelled St Ives, indeed in Cornish it was Portia.

But today the confusion with St Ives in Cambridgeshire is commonplace and every hake (native of the Cornish town) knows of the drivers, usually of articulated lorries stuck fast in Tregenna Hill, who have arrived at the wrong St Ives for their delivery address.

Yours etc,
VIV COTHEY,
As from: 2 Harry's Court,
St Ives, Cornwall,
November 22.

Heart to hub?

From Mr Roger Braban

Sir, Last week all four hubcaps were stolen from my car. In order to make an insurance claim I notified the police. Today I received a letter from the local station offering "emotional support".

Counselling? For stolen hubcaps?

Yours faithfully,
R. BRABAN,
Savile Club, 69 Brook Street, W1,
November 18.

increase in administrative costs, the increase in income is likely to be minimal.

I urge the Trustees and those who supply their funding to reconsider the change of policy and to reaffirm the British Museum's primary role as a public educational resource.

Yours sincerely,
ERIC FERNIE,
Director,
Courtauld Institute of Art,
Somerset House, Strand, WC2,
November 25.

From Mr Andrew Gibbon-Williams

Sir, Mr Geoffrey Turner (letter, November 23), whose intelligent reflection upon his recent visit to Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum highlighted the nonsense of not charging entrance fees to our major museums, might be interested to know that the practical Dutch also offer a "museum year card". At a modest £11.45 (£17 per annum) it facilitates free access to nearly 300 museums and galleries across the country.

The absurdity of Britain's traditional distaste for funding the care and display of its artistic heritage is currently demonstrated at the Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries which, having just opened a £7.5 million modern art gallery, now closes all its galleries except that at Kelvingrove every Tuesday to save money.

Moreover, as part of a "restructuring" exercise, it is on course to abolish a third of its curatorial and two thirds of its conservation staff next year.

Yours faithfully,
A. GIBBON-WILLIAMS,
Merindale,
Broughton, Lanarkshire,
November 26.

From Professor Nicholas Mann,
Director of the Warburg Institute

Sir, Much of the debate surrounding the crisis faced by the Trustees of the British Museum has centred on the damaging effects that the Government's funding cuts will undoubtedly have on the museum's role as an outstanding public resource.

I should like to call attention to a less popular but nonetheless funda-

mental aspect of the part that the museum plays in maintaining civilised values: the support that it gives, through its collections and its curators, to scholarship. Any measures which inhibit access to the collections will inevitably damage the cause of teaching and research in the humanities; there is even a risk that certain disciplines (such as numismatics, which is not taught in universities) will disappear altogether if not fostered in the museum.

The preservation and study of the past are not luxuries, but essential components of our civilisation. Without them, the humane values for which this country was once admired cannot survive.

It is tragic that the Government is compounding the deleterious effects of cuts in university funding with a further blow to the greatest of our national repositories of knowledge. We must hope that the Trustees will be able to resist the pressures that now threaten yet another irreplaceable national institution.

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS MANN,
Director,
The Warburg Institute,
Woburn Square, WC1,
November 25.

From Professor Emeritus
G. B. Winter

Sir, The value of the British Museum as "a great educational resource" (letter, November 21) was highlighted in a visit I paid there yesterday. Large groups of bright-eyed primary school children and their teachers filled many parts of the building. Their evident excitement communicated itself to all around, including those of us no longer in the flower of youth.

Surely any imposition of an entrance charge which might adversely affect these activities would be a great shame. Let us hope that wiser counsels prevail and that free access to this wonderful museum is maintained.

Yours faithfully,
G. B. WINTER,
1 Hatfield Close,
Elstree, Hertfordshire,
November 21.

School tests

From Mrs June Benn

Sir, Two senior A-level English examiners have resigned because they feel that the marking system will penalise flair and originality (report, November 23). As a former teacher I find it ironic that in a subject like literature at this level, in which I can remember real originality based on scholarship being encouraged — especially in the old grammar schools and in the S-level papers — it is now beyond the wit of the bureaucrats who set the papers to recognise excellence.

On the other hand, in a maths test for 13-year-olds (report, November 21), the question (on "number sense") required an approximate answer. They were asked about how many times a heart beats in an hour if it beats 72 times a minute. The answer had to be one of four given. Why not get the benighted adolescents to actually multiply 60 by 72 (4,320) instead of asking for an approximate answer (4,200) which could very well be guessed at? Multiple choice is the wrong type of question for maths at this level.

I despair of our education system. We need both rigour and creativity — but at different times, at different stages and for different subjects.

Yours sincerely,
JUNE BENN,
St Andrew's House,
113 Mycenae Road, Blackheath, SE3,
November 23.

From Dr N. G. McCrum

Sir, Mr McClure (letter, November 20) states that "most German parents that I've spoken to in explaining the idea of league tables find the idea preposterous not to say warped".

That is a realistic view, since by far the greater number of German schools "graduate" their own pupils — there is no national test. The pupils sit exams set and marked by their teachers, so one school cannot be compared to another.

Yours faithfully,
N. G. MCCRUM,
Hertford College, Oxford,
November 21.

From Mr John D. Miller

Sir, Now this year's league tables have been published, is it not time to play "Fantasy School"? The winners could receive fantasy qualifications to secure fantasy jobs.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN D. MILLER,
54 Leslie Road, N2,
November 20.

Their number's up

From Mr P. D. Mason

Sir, Your report about side-bets on the National Lottery (November 25) suggests that "a number of ministers" are not against the practice.

A number? What number? Who'll give me odds on three?

Yours faithfully,
P. D. MASON,
8 Chesterfield Road, Chiswick, W4,
November 25.

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.

OBITUARIES

DAME JOAN HAMMOND

Dame Joan Hammond, DBE, Australian soprano, died in Bowral, New South Wales, on November 26 aged 84. She was born on May 24, 1912.

One of the most popular sopranos to sing in Britain during the postwar years, Joan Hammond appeared with the leading opera companies: Covent Garden, Sadler's Wells, the Carl Rosa. She was a familiar figure on the concert platform and on radio; she also had a substantial repertoire in oratorio. But to the public at large she was famous above all for a single aria, *O mio babbino caro* (O my beloved papa), from Puccini's opera *Gianni Schicchi*, which was little known in Britain before she recorded it. A million copies were sold — an extraordinary figure for those economically austere times.

Although always styling herself "an Aussie", Joan Hammond was not Australian by birth or parentage. Her mother and father were British and she was born in Christchurch, New Zealand. But the family soon moved to Sydney, where she went to school at the Presbyterian Ladies College, Pymble, and later to the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, where she studied voice and violin. From the start she was a tough competitor, determined to succeed whether at sport or at music.

A cycling accident put paid to a possible career as a violinist, but she was soon on stage singing small roles for the Williamson Opera Company. Simultaneously she won the New South Wales Ladies' Golf Championship, which opened up another possible future as a sports reporter for the Sydney newspapers, a role she took on briefly as well as being a gossip columnist.

Singing, however, soon took over from journalism. Much encouraged by the Gowrie family with whom she kept up a lifelong connection — the 1st Earl was then Governor of New South Wales — Joan Hammond set sail for Europe where she was to spend her active singing career.

The immediate prewar years were split between London and Vienna. Her London recital debut included Eric Coates's *The Green Hills of Somerset* (later recorded accompanied by Gerald Moore), a number which was to be almost as closely associated with her as *O mio babbino caro*. Her first major operatic appearance was at the Volksoper in Vienna, where she was engaged on a two-year contract in 1939 as Nedda in



Joan Hammond in one of her many appearances as Nedda at Covent Garden in the 1950s

Pagliacci. She turned down an offer to join the Glyndebourne chorus as having insufficient prestige. More roles followed at the Volksoper and resulted in an invitation from the Staatsoper itself, to sing Mimì and Violetta.

Then came the war. When it was over, Hammond sang both these roles with the Staatsoper in the period of its exile at the Theater an der Wien, the Staatsoper having been bombed in 1945. But she professed herself unhappy with these performances, which were in German. Earlier a contract for the same two parts had come from La Scala, Milan in January 1940. She crossed the

border to Italy prepared to sing but, with that country about to enter the war on the Axis side, she hastily scuttled back to safety in Britain on diplomatic advice.

It was in 1941 that she made her famous version of *O mio babbino caro* for EMI. The recording team was looking for an item to fill up the fourth side of the record and it was Hammond's own suggestion. In her fast-moving and readable autobiography, *A Voice, A Life* (1970), she claims that the mighty Walter Legge, who was in charge of the sessions, had never heard of it. That may or may not be true, but Lauretta's aria did not take long thereafter to work

its passage into the public's heart. During the war Joan Hammond was a member of the Carl Rosa Company, 1942-45, sang with the Dublin Grand Opera Society and made numerous tours entertaining the troops under the auspices of ENSA. She did not immediately feature in the plans of Covent Garden to rebuild its opera company in the postwar years under the directorship of David Webster. For the Italian repertoire the American soprano Doris Doree was preferred and Elisabeth Schwarzkopf came in from Vienna to sing Violetta in *Traviata* and Mimì in *Bohème*. Eventually Webster pencilled her in for *Traviata* and this was the opera in which she made her house debut on October 6, 1948, with Silver as di Luna but an otherwise no more than moderate cast.

But Hammond had a personal success and was back the next month as Mimì, replacing Schwarzkopf. It was not the ideal role for her physically. She was a robust, somewhat masculine figure who kept her hair cut short in order, so it was claimed, that her wigs could fit more easily. The following spring she was a last-minute replacement for Sylvie Fisher in the title role of *Fidelio*, the only non-Italian part she was to play at the Garden. The producer told her where to stand on stage, but not, Joan Hammond later claimed, how to get off it once she had finished singing.

She made a number of appearances in the early 1950s in parts that showed her powerful soprano off to good effect, including *Tosca* and, most especially, *Aida*. In Verdi her good friend Constance Shacklock was often by her side as Amneris. Even so, her considerable band of admirers considered that she was not being used sufficiently at the Opera House and in 1955 a petition to this effect with 300 signatures was handed in at the stage door. Webster replied tartly that he had made dozens of offers over the years but Miss Hammond had rejected most of them. Perhaps she remembered her experience with *Fidelio*. In any event, the result was that she disappeared from the Covent Garden stage for the second half of the decade, returning for a handful of *Aidas* at the end of 1959, giving her last performance there on January 2, 1960.

Her successes at Sadler's Wells were much more assured and included Elisabeth in the *Don Carlos* directed by George Devine at a time when the opera was virtually unknown here, and in the title role of

Dvorak's *Rusalka*. Hammond had another big public hit with the aria sung by Dvorak's water nymph of the title, *O Silver Moon*, and there was one famous night when she sat on one of the water lilies of the stage pond and promptly broke it. She was a big-boned lady.

She made many records after *O mio babbino caro*, singing both in English and in the original language. When she was tackling Puccini's other little girls, such as Mimì and Cio-Cio-San, the line could sound a bit jerky. Probably she was heard at her best in roles in the East European and Russian repertoire, including Dvorak's *Rusalka* and Tchaikovsky's *Tatiana* (*Eugene Onegin*). She appeared with the New York City Centre Opera and with a number of other overseas companies.

In 1957 she toured the Soviet Union with the mezzo Constance Shacklock, performing operas such as *Eugene Onegin* and *The Queen of Spades* in the original language. Their joint success was considerable, the journal *Sovetskaya Kultura* giving lavish praise to what it described as "these magnificent artists". Hammond's *Tatiana* drew special praise for her "nobility, strength, sensitiveness, pride and deep-rooted melancholy" in a performance which was adjudged to penetrate to the very essence of Pushkin's heroine. Late in her career she was bold enough to tackle the title role of Strauss's *Salome* with Australian Opera.

Ill-health forced her to stop singing in her early fifties. An operation in 1964 left her partially deaf. Heart trouble made the doctors advise her not to continue with the stresses and strains of the international soprano's life and she announced her retirement a year later. She gave up her home in Buckinghamshire, where she had a multiplicity of pets of various shapes and sizes, and in 1966 retired to Australia. There she campaigned for music facilities for the young as vigorously as she had written to the press in Britain when she thought injustice had been done.

Two tragedies marred this final period of her life. A fire in 1967 destroyed part of her home, but even worse were the bush blazes of 1983 which destroyed virtually all her musical memorabilia, including scores, programmes and records.

Joan Hammond was appointed OBE in 1953, advanced to CBE in 1963 and created DBE in 1974. She was unmarried but shared much of her life with her secretary and friend Lolita Morrison.

MICHAEL BENTINE



Michael Bentine, CBE, radio and television comedian, died on November 26 aged 74. He was born in Watford on January 26, 1922.

AN INVENTIVE comedian of the bizarre and surreal, Michael Bentine made his name as a founder member of *The Goon Show*, and successfully transferred the anarchic *Goon*-style humour to television in his series *It's a Square World*. The show was completely original and well ahead of its time.

But having made the breakthrough, Bentine was unable to sustain the momentum and the rest of his career was something of an anticlimax. It was left to other shows, like *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, to take up the challenge he had thrown to more conventional humour. Some of his critics said that Bentine was too good-looking to be a really successful comedian.

Michael Bentine was born the son of a Peruvian-born scientist father and English mother. His grandfather had been Peru's Vice-President. He went to Eton, claiming that his fees were paid out of his mother's bridge winnings, and during the Second World War served in the Royal Air Force as an intelligence officer. Bentine was one of the generation of talented young comedians who emerged in the post-war years and, like many of the others, served an apprenticeship at the Windmill Theatre. In 1949, still largely unknown, he was chosen for the Royal Variety Performance.

In 1951 he joined forces with Spike Milligan, Harry Secombe and Peter Sellers on the BBC radio comedy which started as *Crazy People* and became *The Goon Show*. Bentine took part in the first two series but came to realise that his humour was essentially visual rather than verbal. With a wild shock of black hair, and a black beard, he was a natural for television, though it was not until the early 1960s that he was able to harness his talents in *It's a Square World*.

In a series of glorious irreverence, one of Bentine's favourite targets was the BBC Television Centre, headquarters of his employers. This was regularly subjected to mock attacks, on one occasion by torpedoes and on another, in a rather different vein, by marauding Red Indians. The BBC hierarchy was less amused than the public and Bentine was the recipient of an unintentionally ambiguous

memorandum which read: "Under no circumstances is the BBC Television Centre to be used for purposes of entertainment."

In another stunt Bentine sailed the Houses of Parliament in a Chinese junk and bombed the building with polythene cannon-balls. Other delights of the series were a flea circus routine and crazy lectures during which models and diagrams would spring to life. *It's a Square World* helped to further the careers of several comedy talents, among them Dick Emery, Frank Thornton and Clive Dunn. The series was revived in 1977 after a gap of 13 years but failed to have the same impact.

During the 1970s Bentine presented *Potty Time*, a popular and long-running ITV children's programme featuring hairy and faceless puppet characters. In 1981 he launched another children's show, *Madabout*, which was built around unusual interests and activities. In 1984 he starred in his first radio series for 30 years, *The Best of Bentine*.

Away from comedy, Bentine dabbled in many fields, particularly science, exploration and invention. An expert on hand guns, he advised the Peruvian Government on weaponry and small arms. He also helped that country's leprosy control programme and took several overland expeditions into the rainforests of the Amazon.

He was appointed CBE last year. His autobiography, *The Long Banana Skin*, appeared in 1975. Two of his other books, *The Door Marked Summer* (1981) and *Doors of the Mind* (1981), recounted his experiences of the paranormal and he also published *A Shy Person's Guide to Life*.

The paranormal was always a great interest and became a serious study after he foresaw the death of one of the sons of his second marriage, Stuart, who was killed in a light aircraft crash in Hampshire in 1972. His private life suffered further tragedy when the daughter of his first marriage, Elaine, died of cancer in 1983. Four years later the elder daughter of his second marriage, Marylla, also died of cancer.

His first marriage, to a Frenchwoman, was dissolved. He and his second wife, Clemencia, a former ballet dancer whom he married in 1947, had two other children, a son and a daughter. His wife and his son Richard and daughter Serena survive him.

HUGH BULLOCK

Hugh Bullock, president of the Pilgrims of the United States, died on November 5 aged 98. He was born on June 2, 1898.

AS THE chief executive of the investment bank founded by his father more than a century ago, Hugh Bullock wrote himself into the history of Wall Street by pioneering unit trusts in New York in the 1950s. On this side of the Atlantic, however, he was best known as one of the leading Anglophiles of his time, in the mould of John McCloy or even Dean Acheson.

He was a man who believed in peace through strength and in practical measures, and as such he pushed vigorously after the war for the creation of Nato and the Marshall Plan.

In 1955 he was a natural choice to become president of the US Pilgrims who, like their sister organisation in Britain, are dedicated to the special relationship. He went on to lead them for a record term of more than forty years. During this time he twice played host to the Queen during royal visits to the United States.

As a prominent member of

the New York Yacht Club he also became friendly with Sir Edward Heath who, when Prime Minister, spent sailing holidays at the Bullocks' country house on Martha's Vineyard. The veteran American broadcaster Walter Cronkite once observed that every British VIP visiting the United States would end up at some time in Bullock's office on Wall Street or at his Fifth Avenue apartment to celebrate the special relationship over a glass of port.

Few were better placed to represent British interests in America, given Bullock's leading position in New York society. Cronkite, Douglas Fairbanks Jr and Henry Luce were among his close friends in Manhattan. Despite his



patrician lifestyle, Bullock remained a hard-working and hard-headed professional

banker. Among his innovations was the Calvin Bullock Forum, a monthly meeting at 4pm at which guest speakers included Cabinet ministers, presidential candidates or NASA astronauts.

But each meeting lasted only 45 minutes and the timing was strictly observed. There were no introductions, no question-and-answer sessions and no votes of thanks. The idea was that as soon as the allotted 45 minutes were up, all those present could scurrier back to their desks.

Despite having been part of the New York establishment for more than 70 years, Hugh Bullock was born in Denver, Colorado, moving to the East Coast to be educated. This process was interrupted by the First World War in which he served as a second lieutenant in the US infantry after leaving his fee-paying Hotchkiss School. Returning after the Armistice to Williams College, Massachusetts, he graduated from there in 1921 before joining his father's firm to begin his career as an investment banker. Bullock also served in the Second World War as a lieutenant-colonel and thereafter maintained close links with the three Services, each of which at various times conferred awards on him.

He was, indeed, loaded with honours of all kinds and with outside the United States. Britain's contributions included an honorary OBE in 1946 which was advanced to an honorary KBE in 1957 and finally crowned by his appointment as an honorary GBE twenty years later.

Hugh Bullock's many business interests were surpassed only by the number of professional and other organisations to which he belonged. These included several others with transatlantic links, most notably the English-Speaking Union. He was also a leading figure in the Episcopalian Church.

As a banker he was fiercely independent, with a reputation for being the best chairman of a meeting in New York. Wall Street contemporaries point out that he could have sold the bank of Calvin Bullock many times over for a large profit.

He resisted the temptation, however, until 1984 when he retired, eventually disposing of it to Equitable Life, while remaining head of the Bullock Investment Advisory Company. Despite his interest in and patronage of the arts, his only publication was *The Story of Investment Banking*, which he produced in 1959.

Tall, erect and immaculately groomed, Hugh Bullock was a natural for television, though it was not until the early 1960s that he was able to harness his talents in *It's a Square World*.

In a series of glorious irreverence, one of Bentine's favourite targets was the BBC Television Centre, headquarters of his employers. This was regularly subjected to mock attacks, on one occasion by torpedoes and on another, in a rather different vein, by marauding Red Indians. The BBC hierarchy was less amused than the public and Bentine was the recipient of an unintentionally ambiguous

ON THIS DAY

November 28, 1873

The dread of being buried alive has led many people to leave detailed instructions in their wills as to how death was to be beyond question. Hearts must be pierced with a red-hot iron or a 4in needle; or even separated from the body and then reinserted.

James William Freshfield, by his will, proved in 1894, well states the very natural and common feeling on the matter: "I have long desired," he says, "to make arrangements to guard against the possibility of premature interment, and have taken great care to avert a consequence so dreadful. I therefore desire that, previous to my interment, my body may be opened and the heart effectually separated, and returned into the body." A most singular condition was attached to the gift of several, freehold and copyhold cottages and fields by the will of Henry Trigg, grocer, of Stevenage, Herts, proved in Archidiaconal Court at

Huntingdon in October 1724; they were given to his brother Thomas, upon condition of his fulfilling his wishes with respect to the laying of his body. These wishes are thus expressed: "And as to my body, I commit it to the west end of my house, to be decently laid there upon a floor erected by my executor upon the pulpit for the same purpose, nothing doubting that at the general resurrection I shall receive the same again by the mighty power of God." The legate was to have his legacy if he neglected or refused to lay the body where so desired. However, he seems to have taken care to get his legacy, for we believe the remains of the testator are still upon the pulpit or rafters at the west end of his house. A new way to pay old debts was discovered by Mr Friedrich Adolph Zimmerman. After directing payment of certain debts he goes on to say, "To a certain English Isaacmaker, however, named Steinbach, who pretends that I still owe him \$147, I bequest my recent written novel, *The Son without a Father* with *Two Mothers*." Whether the creditor gave a receipt for the debt on getting his manuscript, whether he was satisfied with it, and whether it vindicated its paradoxical title, we know not; but we suspect Mr. Steinbach would rather have had his \$147 in cash. —Illustrated London News.

PERSONAL COLUMN

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ALL THEATRE & Music...
ALL THEATRE & Music...

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PORTUGAL & Canaries, All areas...

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A BIRTHDAY...
A BIRTHDAY...

FOR SALE

A BIRTHDAY...
A BIRTHDAY...
A BIRTHDAY...

HEALTH & BEAUTY

WOMEN ABOUT FURNITURE...
WOMEN ABOUT FURNITURE...
WOMEN ABOUT FURNITURE...

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Information on Betty May...
Information on Betty May...
Information on Betty May...

ANIMALS IN NEED

How near we are to the cure...
How near we are to the cure...
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FLATSHARE London's Greatest...
FLATSHARE London's Greatest...
FLATSHARE London's Greatest...

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CONNECTIONS on flights & boats...
CONNECTIONS on flights & boats...

COURT & SOCIAL

FORWARDING MARRIAGES AND MARRIAGES...
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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 28 1996

Alliance & Leicester board may drop flotation plan

By Robert Miller
THE planned £2.5 billion stock market flotation of Alliance & Leicester could be pulled after a board meeting today.

The UK's fourth-largest building society, headed by Peter White, said last night it had received legal advice that its transfer document, which has been mailed to 3.5 million savers and borrowers, contains information that would be misleading if a planned new Building

Societies Bill is published. The planned flotation of Alliance & Leicester, which owns Girobank, is due to be voted on by members at a special meeting on December 10 in London's Docklands. The society has already received 1.5 million votes. Under the terms of the deal some 2.4 million members could receive shares on flotation worth up to £1,200. If the plan proceeds, dissident members could launch a legal challenge.

The new Bill, currently being drafted after its predecessor was dropped from the Queen's speech, has abandoned the clause, contained in the present 1986 Building Societies Act, which gives converting societies five years protection from hostile takeover bids.

When the society drew up its transfer document, it was based on the present Act. On page 20 the society's board states that "the successful implementation of Alliance & Leicester's strategy would be achieved most effectively by the society's continued independence... loss of independence could threaten the society's record in recent years, endanger the society's traditional values of customer service, jeopardise the position of employees and would be likely to prevent members from retaining shares in the society's business".

The society's transfer document said its independence was "more likely to be preserved by conversion which affords a period of five years' protection from takeover". Other building societies that could be affected by a new Building Societies Bill are the Halifax, Woolwich and Northern Rock. None, however, are as far down the line with conversion plans as Alliance & Leicester.

SFO and police launch inquiry over Wickes

By Robert Miller
THE Serious Fraud Office and the Metropolitan Police have launched a formal investigation into the former senior management of Wickes, the DIY retailer, over a £51 million overstatement of past profits.

A number of senior executives have left the company since the profits overstatement was disclosed in June. More recently, after an internal investigation into the buying department at Wickes, other members of staff have left the firm, which employs 3,800 people in the UK and has 120 stores around the country.

Henry Sweetbaum, former chairman and chief executive, who denies any knowledge of the practices that led to the overstatement under investigation, resigned in June. He has since agreed to return £720,000 that was paid under a long-term incentive plan in 1994 and 1995. Further, he waived any claim to an additional £855,000 due under the same scheme. He retains his pension rights, however, worth around £175,000 a year.

Treor Llewellyn, former finance director, has also agreed to pay back all £485,000 of his 1995 net bonus payments. Mr Llewellyn is now finance director at Caradon. Michael Corner, administration director, also resigned but was not asked to repay any of his bonuses. Other senior executives who resigned from Wickes, which also has stores in Belgium, The Netherlands and France, are Les Rosenthal, group trading director, and Chris Miles, commercial director. Neither received compensation for loss of office.

The SFO investigation, headed by Fred Corford, a senior fraud office lawyer, assisted by Brian Killingback, a financial investigator, and Detective Chief Inspector Kevin Dulling of the Metropolitan Police fraud squad.

Wickes said last night: "The board of Wickes has been informed that an investigation into the activities of its former senior management is to be conducted by the Serious Fraud Office. The company intends to co-operate fully with these enquiries. No further comment can be made at this stage."



The London home of Henry Sweetbaum in Regent's Park



Henry Sweetbaum denies any knowledge of the affair

Sir Rocco checks back into hotel trade at £12m

By Alasdair Murray and Iola Smith
SIR ROCCO FORTE announced his return to the hotel trade yesterday with plans for a new £12 million luxury hotel in Cardiff.

The 120-bed hotel - which will be the first five-star standard hotel in Wales - should be completed before the Rugby World Cup in 1999. Situated on a promontory in Cardiff Bay, the hotel will have views over the Bristol Channel on three sides.

Sir Rocco has made no secret of his desire to create a new hotel group since losing control of the family founded Forte business to Granada at the beginning of the year. His initial attempts to re-establish himself included a £1 billion bid to buy back the Exclusive and Le Meridien chains, which was rejected by Granada.

The Forte organisation said yesterday that the Cardiff site was the first step towards creating a new hotel group. It is looking at a dozen or so other sites in Europe.

Richard Power, commercial director for the Forte organisation, said that Sir Rocco was concentrating efforts outside London because acquisition prices in the UK were inflated. The acquisition trail would reach France, Germany and Italy.

The Forte organisation has not settled on names for either the new hotel or the new group. It hopes to make an announcement early next year. It will be unable to use the Forte family name, which was acquired by Granada as part of the £3.9 billion takeover deal.

Hinchliffe faces battle over Covent Garden flat

By Jason Nisse
STEPHEN HINCHLIFFE, the Sheffield businessman whose collapsed Facia empire is being investigated by the Serious Fraud Office, is being pursued for the return of a flat in central London that is valued at £100,000.

The flat, above Red or Dead's shop in Covent Garden, was owned by the fashionable shoe retailer when it was bought by Facia for £3.5 million in January 1995.

But earlier this year, when the shoe chain's founders, Wayne and Gerard Hemingway, bought Red or Dead back from KPMG, the receivers of Facia, they found that the flat had become the possession of a company called TWH Developments, whose only shareholders are Mr Hinchliffe and his wife, Marjorie. TWH had apparently bought the flat from Red or Dead for just £1 in a contract dated October 16, 1995.

Jeffrey O'Connell Russell, solicitors for Mr and Mrs Hemingway and their new backers, Pentland Group, wrote to Mr Hinchliffe a few weeks ago asking him to return the flat. He replied, via his solicitors, Peters & Peters, refusing the request.

Walker seeks £35m from former company

By Jon Ashworth
GEORGE WALKER, former head of Brent Walker, has unleashed a fresh salvo in his legal battle with the company he founded. His daughter, the Marchioness of Milford Haven, is named in an action seeking at least £35 million from the company and Standard Chartered, its lead banker, over an issue of bonds six years ago.

Mr Walker's other children, Jason and Rosita, are also named as joint plaintiffs in the action, outlined in a writ issued at the High Court, with Jasaro, a Walker family trust, which contributed funds towards the 1990 bond issue. The action is the latest since the former boxer was cleared of theft and false accounting in October 1994. He has since accused Brent Walker's bankers, led by Standard

Chartered, of behaving like "the mafia", and said that they were guilty of a "corporate mugging" in forcing his removal from the board.

Among other things, Brent Walker and Standard Chartered are accused of being in breach of their fiduciary duty over a loan advanced by the Walker family. The Walkers are seeking the return of the money plus unspecified damages.

The Walker family lawyer, Michael Coleman of Harkavys, said it was "inappropriate" to comment on the proceedings. Mr Coleman recently won an order for £6 million in favour of the Walkers, but the award is frozen pending an appeal. Brent Walker acknowledged receipt of the writ, saying: "We've sent it to our lawyers." Standard Chartered said it was aware of the writ but made no comment.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES	
FTSE 100	4049.2 (-19.2)
Yield	3.52%
FTSE All share	1800.52 (-8.21)
Nikkei	21345.28 (-72.77)
Dow Jones	6487.48 (-30.93)
S&P Composite	754.57 (-1.36)

US RATE	
Federal Funds	5 1/8% (5 1/8%)
Long Bond	100 1/8% (101 1/2%)
Yield	6.43% (6.40%)

LONDON MONEY	
3-month interbank	6 1/8% (6 1/8%)
Life long rate	110 1/2% (111 1/2%)

STERLING	
New York	1.8763* (1.8720)
London	1.8738 (1.8727)
Frankfurt	2.5536 (2.5551)
Paris	8.6521 (8.6503)
Switzerland	2.1598 (2.1642)
Yen	169.70 (168.55)
£ index	93.2 (93.5)

DOLLAR	
London	1.8763* (1.8720)
Frankfurt	2.5536 (2.5551)
Paris	8.6521 (8.6503)
Switzerland	2.1598 (2.1642)
Yen	169.70 (168.55)
£ index	93.2 (93.5)

NORTH SEA OIL	
Brent 15-day (Feb)	\$22.20 (\$22.20)

GOLD	
London close	\$374.78 (\$374.85)

* denotes midday trading price

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Institute of Fiscal Studies doubtful about public spending plans

Budget gain 'nil' for average family

By JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE average family gained nothing from Kenneth Clarke's 1996 Budget, contrary to the Government's claims, according to calculations by the Institute for Fiscal Studies.

The institute said yesterday that the average family gained £1.64 a week from the main Budget changes in taxation. But once other measures were taken into account, this average gain was wiped out.

These measures are the phasing out of tax relief on profit-related pay schemes, the increase in air passenger duty, an extension to insurance premium tax and further pressure on council tax bills.

The institute's examination of the effects of the Budget on households at different points on the income scale shows that the bottom 30 per cent of households were net losers, with the poorest 10 per

cent seeing a loss of 48p per week. This compares with the top 10 per cent on the income scale, who benefit most from the Budget with a weekly gain in their post-tax income of £5.64.

This Budget's biggest loser is the single parent. A lone parent without means-tested

benefits loses £6.30 a week, while lone parents on income support are left £5.20 a week worse off.

In a generally critical appraisal of the Budget, the institute took issue with the Chancellor's assumptions about raising extra revenue, particularly the spend-to-save

package designed to crack down on benefit fraud and tax avoidance.

The scheme will cost £300 million over the next three years and is predicted to recoup £6.7 billion, more than eight times that amount.

Andrew Dilnot, director of the IFS, said that, although the

aims of the scheme were to be applauded, it was "cheeky" and "somewhat odd" to include these hoped-for savings into the Government's tax and spending plans.

The institute also threw doubt on the realism of the Chancellor's public spending plans, some of which it

described as "hopelessly tight" given huge unforeseen spending on mopping up the BSE crisis and apparent generosity in health and education.

It noted that the spending plans were contingent partly on proceeds from privatisations, which appeared in the Budget arithmetic as spending cuts. These include the sale of the student loan portfolio for about £1 billion and the sale of Ministry of Defence married quarters for about £700 million.

The institute also argued that the spending plans depended on unrealistically low inflation forecasts with the GDP deflator assumed to be 2 per cent from the 1997-98 fiscal year and underlying inflation to be 2 per cent from 1998. Any overrun on these inflation assumptions would require deep spending cuts to keep to planned control totals.

Pennington, page 29

Tax hits travel agents and holidaymakers

TRAVEL agents who sell their own holiday insurance are reeling from a government decision to tax them heavily while allowing brokers who sell insurance direct to pay a much lower rate (Marianne Curphey writes).

The Budget announced that insurance premium tax would be raised from 2.5 to 17.5 per cent for some types of insurance. This higher rate applies

to travel insurance sold in a high street agency with a holiday. It also covers mechanical breakdown insurance sold by car dealers, and inclusive warranties sold by retailers of domestic goods.

It means the average holidaymaker, with airport departure tax of £10, will be paying an extra £15 in taxes on a £350 European package of travel and insurance.

Analysts dismiss fear of windfall penalty

THE impact on utilities of the change in capital allowances, announced in the Budget, should amount to about 1 or 2 per cent of their market value, according to some City analysts who are dismissing it as a windfall tax by another name (Christine Buckley writes).

Under the proposed changes, capital allowances on plant and machinery with a working life of 25 years or more will be cut from 25 per cent to 6 per cent. BZW calculates that regional electricity companies would face a hit of 1 to 2 per cent of market value, as would National Grid and British Gas. But some companies fear the impact will be greater. CE Electric, the hostile bidder for Northern Electric, said it will not raise its offer because Northern is now worth less.

Pennington, page 29

Virgin Express in jet talks

Virgin Express, the Brussels low-cost carrier, is in talks to buy up to 25 Boeing 737-700 aircraft. The deal would see the aircraft phased in over five years as the carrier seeks to expand its European network.

Virgin Express was formed in April, when Richard Branson paid £39 million for 90 per cent of Eurobelgian Airlines.

Amber down
Amber Industrial Holdings, the chemicals group, is holding the interim payout at 1.75p a share. Pre-tax profit fell to £13 million (£18.75 million) in the half year to September 30.

Name change
Albrighton, the loss-making quarry company, has a new name. Enstone, and management, it made a cash call for £4.51 million - 70 per cent of its stock market value.

Payout doubles
Nordhamber, the electronics group, is lifting the interim payout to 1.2p (0.6p) and issuing free shares. In the half year to October 31 pre-tax profit was £3.14 million (£2.04 million).

Oriental up
Oriental Restaurant Group made £31,000 (£318,000) pre-tax profit in the half year to September 30. The maiden payout is 1p; earnings were 5.6p (4.1p) a share.

Semple float
Semple Cochrane, the engineering services group, will be valued at £14 million on joining the stock market on Monday. It is placing 2.5 million shares at 180p.

Ranger plan
Ranger Oil plans to spend \$83 million in Britain, developing oilfields and exploring appraisal wells in the North Sea in the hope of increased output in 1998.

Internet deal
Microsoft has agreed with Internet Technology Group to present the AIM company's Internet access service as an optional part of the Windows 95 package.

Vendôme looks to yen upturn

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

VENDÔME, the luxury goods company, said yesterday it was confident that adverse currency movements which hit half-year profits would diminish in the second half.

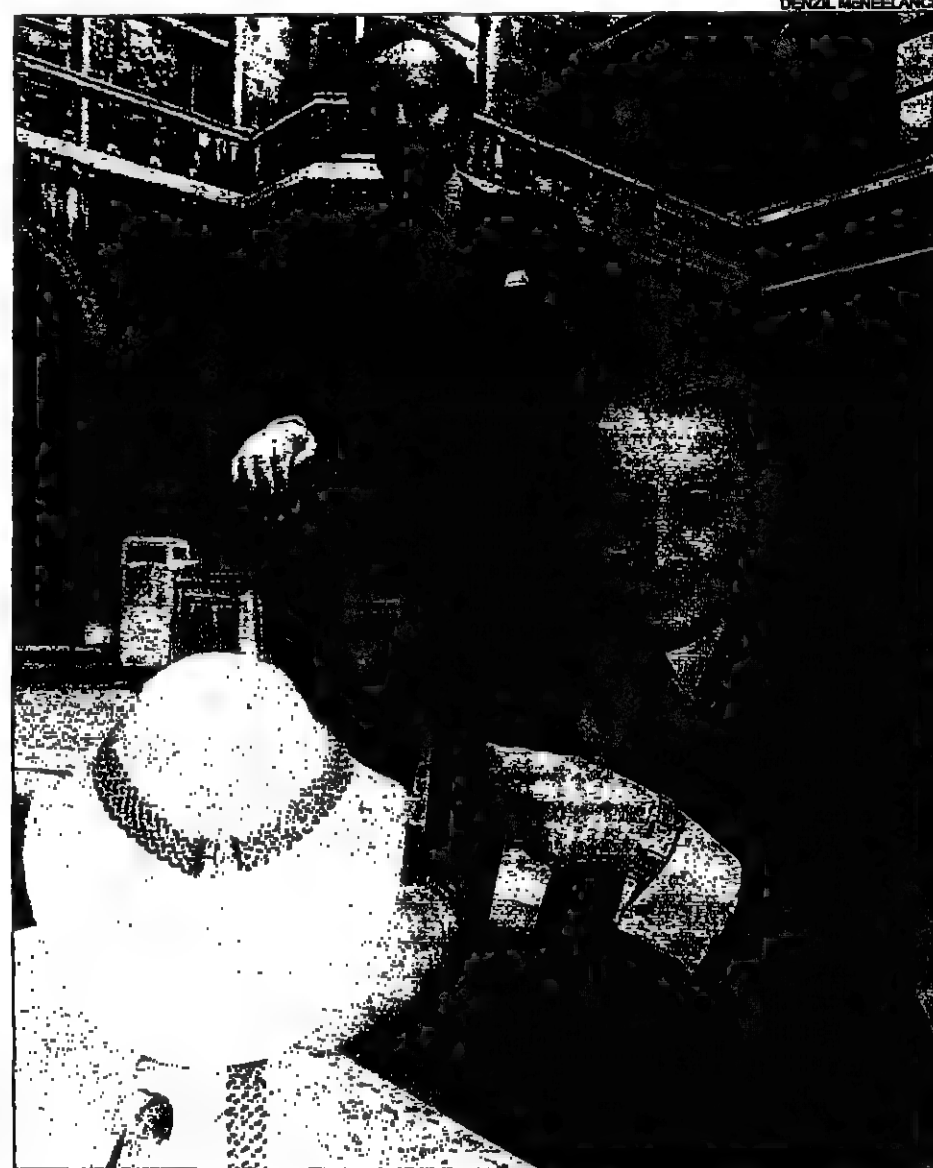
The company, owner of brands such as Dunhill, Cartier and Piaget, reported a 4.6 per cent fall in pre-tax profits, for the six months to the end of September, to £113 million.

The weakening yen hurt sales in the Far East - a market that accounts for 40 per cent of the group's total sales. A fall in interest income from £5.7 million to £3.2 million also hurt profits.

Joseph Kanoui, chairman, said he believed the fall in sales in the Far East was a short term problem and would reverse when the yen recovers strength. He added that overall he was confident of an improved performance in the second half.

Overall turnover was flat at £704 million. Jewellery sales were 15 per cent lower than last year, because of a decline in sales of expensive jewellery items, while leather sales were flat. But sales of watches increased by 13 per cent, boosted by the introduction of new products. The success of the new Cartier fragrance boosted perfume sales by 24 per cent.

Vendôme is 70 per cent owned by the South African controlled Richemont Securities. The interim, due January 31, was increased to 3.62p (3.61p). The results were below expectations and the shares fell 8p to 532½p.



Lord Douro, deputy chairman, left, and Joseph Kanoui expect a better second half

British trade gap less than expected

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

BRITAIN'S trade gap with the rest of the world widened by less than expected in September - suggesting that the recent rise in sterling is yet to hit exporters.

The total trade deficit rose to £899 million in September, from £568 million in August. Excluding oil and erratics, the total trade balance grew from £1.14 billion to £1.39 billion.

Non-EU trade in October was also better than expected, with the trade gap narrowing to £424 million from £805

million in September - the lowest for 18 months.

Economists said that a strong export performance had helped to restrict the growth of the deficit. Overall, export volumes rose 3.1 per cent in the three months to the end of September, while import volumes rose 4.2 per cent.

The deficit with EU countries deteriorated in September to £94 million from £33 million, although the quarterly deficit stood at £700 million - the lowest since early 1993.

Revenue unit raised extra £2bn

THE Inland Revenue division targeted by the Chancellor for extra resources in his Spend to Save initiative raised more than £2 billion in extra tax last year (Jason Nisbet writes).

Kenneth Clarke said that extra money would be spent in targeting larger companies, and that the Inland Revenue is to strengthen its Large Business Office, set up two years ago to make sure big business is paying its share of the tax bill.

In the 1995-96 financial year the Revenue estimated this unit raised an additional £2.17 billion. In the previous year it persuaded one large company to come up with an extra £1.6 billion in tax.

Chief at Fleming's rejects takeover talk

By ROBERT MILLER, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

THE chief executive of Robert Fleming has vowed to keep the merchant bank independent, dismissing persistent City rumours of a takeover bid.

John Manser, who is to become chairman of Flemings when Robin Fleming retires in March, said that the bank had received no formal bid approaches, and added: "We remain independent and profitable and will stay that way."

Flemings yesterday unveiled a 16 per cent rise in pre-tax profits, to £92.2 million, in the six months to September 30. Jardine Fleming recorded a net trading profit of \$82 million, up 28 per cent. However, after costs and fines

arising from regulatory action by Imro, the UK watchdog for fund managers, in August, net profits fell to around \$62 million, from \$63.9 million. Companies within the Fleming group were fined a total of £700,000 and Jardine Fleming agreed to pay £12 million in compensation to investors.

Flemings is lifting its interim dividend by 1p, to 8p, due on January 20. Earnings per share rose to 41.5p, from 35.8p.

The corporate finance arm of Flemings had a successful half-year, raising £13.4 billion of capital for companies.

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City Diary, page 31

Third director leaves House of Fraser

THE management shake-up at House of Fraser instituted by John Coleman, the new chief executive, yesterday claimed the head of Richard Scott, the finance director, who left "by mutual agreement, to pursue his private interests".

The company is discussing a payoff with Mr Scott, who has been with the company for 20 years, under three different sets of owners, and is on a one-year contract which last year saw him paid £167,000. He is the third executive director to leave this year, after the departure of Andrew Jennings, chief executive, and Tony Hancock, operations director.

Mr Coleman announced a new management structure in June and started a marketing review of the company, which is expected to be completed next month. Mr Coleman said that the company had two or three candidates in mind for the finance director's post. Shares in House of Fraser, which were floated at 180p two years ago when Mohamed Al Fayed sold out of the company, slipped 1p to 152p yesterday.

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Redland warning

STERLING'S strength and continuing problems in the German economy have hit profits at Redland, the building materials group said. Rudolph Agnew, chairman, said that so far, fourth-quarter sales in continental Europe were "slightly behind expectations", with the exception of German roofing. A slower than expected improvement in German margins had also hit profits. The warning came at the extraordinary meeting held to approve the merger of its directly owned German roofing business with Braas, the 50.76 per cent-owned German subsidiary. Tempos, page 30

'Spy' ruling favours GM

VOLKSWAGEN could face billion-dollar damages claims after an American court ruled that General Motors' industrial espionage lawsuit against the German carmaker can proceed under US racketeering law. GM has accused José Ignacio López de Arriortua, its former purchasing chief, and other former employees of stealing confidential documents when they left GM to join VW in March 1993. GM yesterday called for the resignation of Señor López, but it would consider an out-of-court settlement with VW, Europe's biggest car manufacturer.

GEC denied in France

THE French Government yesterday said that GEC would not be allowed to hold a 50 per cent stake in Framatome, the state-owned nuclear engineering company. The GEC-Alstom joint venture is currently seeking government approval for a takeover of Framatome. Lord Westminster, the former GEC managing director, had said that GEC would insist on a 50 per cent stake to preserve the balance of power in the joint venture. Lord Westminster, who left the GEC board in August, said: "Framatome is an important operation because nuclear power will become an alternative again."

Mid Kent attacks MMC

MID KENT HOUSING, the water company, has condemned a Monopolies and Mergers Commission inquiry into a would-be takeover by Saur and General Utilities as costly and time consuming. It said that so far it had spent £1.26 million in contesting the bid and dealing with the MMC. Mid Kent reported an 8.4 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to £4.9 million in the half year to September 30 after a £1.59 million charge against disposal. Adjusted profits increased 46.7 per cent to £7.5 million and earnings rose 49.4 per cent to 35.1p a share. The interim dividend rises to 12p a share, from 6.25p.

Meyer holds dividend

MEYER INTERNATIONAL, the timber and building products group, is holding the interim dividend at 4.2p a share. In the six months to September 30, pre-tax profits were little changed at £20.3 million (£20.1 million). Earnings were 10.6p a share (10.3p). Harry Langman, chairman, said it was unlikely the slight improvement in the housing market would effect results until next year. He expects Meyer to take advantage of an expected further upswing. Tempos, page 30

Kewill sales up 20%

KEWILL SYSTEMS, the software group, increased pre-tax profits to £3.2 million, from £2.5 million, in the six months to September 30. Sales rose by 20 per cent to £19.8 million, from £16.5 million, with earnings increasing to 17.5p a share from 14.6p. The interim dividend is lifted to 3.6p a share from 3p. Kevin Overstall, chairman, said the group had achieved strong growth and was well placed to achieve further growth both organically and through strategic acquisitions.

Vibroplant in the red

VIBROPLANT, the troubled plant hire group, recorded a pre-tax loss of £491,000 (£3.68 million profit) in the six months to September 30. It said investment returns were at an all-time low. Reported turnover halved to £17.8 million. On an underlying basis, sales were only 7 per cent behind. In spite of losses of 0.71p per share (5.1p profit), it will maintain an interim dividend of 1.4p, due on January 9. Its shares fell 5p yesterday, to a three-year low of 63½p.

Crabtree suffers slip

CRABTREE GROUP, the metal decorating machinery manufacturer, suffered a decline in pre-tax profits to £2.59 million (£4.8 million) in the half year to September 30. Turnover rose 48 per cent to £48.5 million (£32.8 million). Earnings fell to 9.8p a share (21.6p) and a final dividend of 5.25p gives a maintained total of 9p for the year. Richard Oury, chairman, said order books had improved and the company was well placed for any improvement in the Far East and to expand US sales.

OFT undertaking

Directors of National Homecare, an independent servicing company that does repairs on behalf of retailers such as MFI, Currys and Dixons, have agreed to give written assurances to the Director-General of Fair Trading about their future conduct. The agreement follows discussions with the OFT, which said the company had "failed to meet its standards and also to honour compensation pledges". Trading standards officers have received hundreds of complaints about the company.

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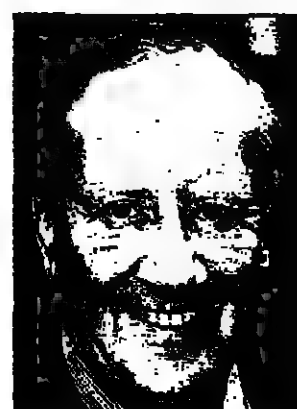
T&N puts £1bn ring-fence around asbestos liabilities

By CARL MORTIMER

T&N, the automotive components group, has put a £1 billion ring-fence around all future claims against it for asbestos-related injuries.

The measures include a £323 million provision in the current year against future claims, which are estimated to be worth £550 million. The company will also take out a £92 million insurance policy to provide a further £500 million of cover. A consortium, including Centre Re, Munich Re and Swiss Re, will meet claims larger than £690 million - the highest liability estimate.

Sir Colin Hope, chairman, said that proposals would bring to an end the uncertainty surrounding the asbestos



Sir Colin: uncertainty over

issue. The writedown, combined with the insurance premium and a £50 million extra provision for some past claims will wipe out T&N's balance sheet reserves. On a

pro-forma basis, and including tax relief, T&N will suffer a £265 million hit to its profit and loss account this year.

The company is to seek shareholders' permission for a capital reduction, to cut the nominal value of T&N's £1 shares to 40p in order to create sufficient reserves with which to pay dividends.

T&N's action on its asbestos liability comes after several setbacks, including a successful legal challenge in the US to the Georgine Settlement procedures, a mechanism to settle injury claims. The company is appealing the ruling to the Supreme Court but its estimates of future liability are based on claims without the benefit of Georgine.

Tempos, page 30

Bank	Rate	Bank	Rate	Bank	Rate	Bank	Rate
Amstels 1	2.14	Bank of	2.50	Netherlands	3.018	Bank	2.76
Amstels 2	17.48	Bank of	17.48	New Zealand	2.32	Bank	2.32
Amstels 3	35.82	Bank of	35.82	Portugal	11.32	Bank	10.58
Amstels 4	2.88	Bank of	2.198	S Africa	289.50	Bank	281.00
Amstels 5	0.87	Bank of	0.752	Spain	222.50	Bank	200.50
Amstels 6	10.38	Bank of	8.88	Sweden	11.81	Bank	11.01
Amstels 7	8.27	Bank of	7.22	Switzerland	2.20	Bank	2.20
Amstels 8	2.71	Bank of	2.20	Turkey	175000	Bank	167000
Amstels 9	418	Bank of	384	USA	1.778	Bank	1.848
Amstels 10	12.82	Bank of	12.82				
Amstels 11	1.05	Bank of	0.97				
Amstels 12	5.72	Bank of	5.07				
Amstels 13	2007	Bank of	2007				
Amstels 14	2007	Bank of	2007				
Amstels 15	0.88	Bank of	0.88				

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclay Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

□ Fears of 1980s boom-bust unfounded □ ASB looks at reporting rules □ Another exit at House of Fraser

City locked in cycle of pessimism

THE Chancellor looked weary and impatient yesterday, a touch underwhelmed by the magnitude of the British public who gave his Budget an immediate thumbs down, and the carping, from the City about his arithmetic. Immediate post-Budget reactions — fairly — reflect longer-term assessments — indeed, you could argue that most Budgets linger only a short time in the collective memory.

Nonetheless the negative reaction of the financial markets has been striking given that Ken Clarke, if anything, delivered more than any could have expected. The consensus view before Budget day was that, despite the political pressure under which the Government labours, Mr Clarke would limit tax cuts to £3 billion. In fact, the Budget presaged a net increase in taxation.

The optimists on public borrowing hoped that the Chancellor would lower his forecast for the public sector borrowing requirement to around £21 billion for next year. In fact, he cut it further. Laying aside some of Mr Clarke's heroic assumptions on public spending control and revenue raising through crackdowns on benefit fraud and tax avoidance, the Chancellor could scarcely have been more obliging to the Jeremiahs in the City.

And yet most economists have

decided not only that interest rates are going up as far as they would have done before this tight Budget, but that they may actually rise by more. Mr Clarke could be forgiven for wondering what on earth he could have done to engender some optimism on the monetary side at least.

For all the number-crunching and nit-picking that inevitably follow Budgets in a political climate of mistrust and uncertainty, the fact is that the contents of Mr Clarke's package are seen as an irrelevance in a City ravaged by inflation hysteria. The markets have managed to convince themselves that the British economy is heading for a 1980s-style boom and bust.

But there is no compelling reason for this collective mania. Geoffrey Dicks of NatWest Markets is one of the very few City voices who feels that the Chancellor has delivered a genuinely tight Budget, which will limit rises in interest rates. He notes, and let us draw up but a short list of factors, that oil prices, responsible for the current spike upwards in inflation, are beginning to fall back, that commodity

prices are weak and falling, earnings growth is running at around 4 per cent, still very low by historical standards, mortgage lending is up a modest 4.3 per cent over a year ago, manufacturing industry has barely shown any growth for a year and the exchange rate is soaring.

These are hardly the harbingers of a runaway boom. But it seems that the City is caught in an obsessive cycle of pessimism, which argues that the British economy can only beat inflation if it grows persistently below trend. Surely we can enjoy one year of healthy growth without the alarm bells ringing?

In the interim, look for a change

IT was ICI that started this particular ball rolling. In 1995 the company published the first interim statement from any public company. Leaving a year between communications with shareholders no longer seemed sensible. Since then interim reporting has become the norm, but the practice has grown in a



surprisingly haphazard way. For example, interim reports do not have to be audited, which means no outside body is required to ensure they coincide with events in the real world.

Furthermore the Stock Exchange still allows the halfway accounts to be produced up to four months after the accounting date. They are allowed to be published on an 'integral' basis, so that any potential nasties in the figures can be ignored in the hope that they will have been sorted out by the year end.

Interim reporting is an oddity in a tightly regulated financial world where reports are steadily moving onto a real time basis.

The Accounting Standards Board (ASB) wants to change the rules. It would change the basis of the rules from the 'integral' to the 'discrete', meaning interim reports would have to stand alone. If that meant that companies with an emphasis on seasonal trading, such as tour operators or retailers, reported one good half year and the other one lousy, then in the words of Sir David Tweedie, the ASB chairman, 'tough'.

The new proposals would also shorten the periods by which the reports have to be produced to a still-generous 60 days. In a world where technology drives the speed of financial reporting, that seems more than enough time for an efficient company to put its figures out. One should remember the real reason behind the old four-month rule, which was that as most companies have a December year end, the busy period for interim reporting would otherwise fall in August.

The City's holiday period was considered sacrosanct, and hence the four-month leeway. Best practice these days should be speedily produced audited accounts that reflect what has happened in the previous six

months. A few grouse might live longer and more productive lives, but at least shareholders would be kept in touch.

New targets, same axe

THE third high-profile departure from House of Fraser this year, but shareholders might be forgiven for wondering whether the wrong man keeps dodging the axe. Richard Scott has quit as finance director "to pursue his private interests", a phrase in this case even more coded and meaningless than usual.

Earlier this year Andrew Jennings gave way to John Coleman as chief executive, and Tony Hancock, the operations director, walked to pursue, yes indeed, other interests. Both departures, like Mr Scott, were old House of Fraser hands dating back to the days when it was owned by the Fayed. The old guard, therefore, has been ritually purged to atone for the awful share price performance by House of Fraser since the float in 1994 at 180p — last night the

shares closed at 152p. Mr Coleman, carrying out one of those strategic reviews that management consultants seem to see as the solution to any problem, did let slip one significant remark yesterday. "The people who we're targeting," he said, "are not the people who in the past have tended to shop at our stores."

Picture in your mind the typical House of Fraser customer, and you see a tweedy woman of indeterminate middle age up from the Shires. Not only is that type prone to take offence at being told she is no longer wanted around here any more, the task of moving her out and moving in the young, fashionable high-spender is a notoriously difficult one. House of Fraser knows the customers it wants and it knows the way to attract them is to put the right sort of goods in the stores and then market them properly. If only it were that simple.

The management probably has another year to demonstrate that the strategy has been both identified and achieved — say by the next set of interims in September 1997. Failure will mean another purge — taking in at last the prime axe-dodger, Brian McGowan, the man brought out of retirement by the Fayed to supervise the flotation for a fee of half a million pounds.

Tate & Lyle fears US price delay

By PAUL DORMAN

A LEADING soft drinks company is delaying key price negotiations with Staley, the US arm of Tate & Lyle, the sugar and sweeteners group, in the hope that corn prices will continue to fall.

Staley, which contributed an estimated 40 per cent of Tate & Lyle's profits in 1995, uses corn to make the sweetener in drinks such as Coca-Cola and Pepsi. The outcome of its discussions will have an important impact on Tate & Lyle's profits this year.

The annual price negotiations usually coincide in December, but Larry Filbeck — confirmed this week as Tate & Lyle's chief executive — said that one of Staley's major customers, as yet unnamed, this year wants to wait until January. Corn prices have virtually halved since peaking at just over \$5 a bushel earlier this year.

Gillian Broadley, analyst at Kleinwort Benson, said a 3-4 per cent cut in the price Staley achieves for its high fructose corn syrup could knock £50

million off the company's profits. Staley's inability to pass high corn costs on to its customers was the main reason behind an 11 per cent fall in Tate & Lyle's annual pre-tax profits to £276.3 million. Staley's own profits more than halved to an estimated £70 million. The total profit from North America fell to £16.2 million — a 34 per cent decline in dollar terms.

Helped by acquisitions, Tate & Lyle's turnover grew 16 per cent to \$5.2 billion in the year to September 28. Fully diluted earnings rose 11 per cent to 42.9p. The company plans to pay an 11.7p final dividend on February 4, increasing the total payout by 6 per cent to 17p a share.

The company said the cost of the July explosion at its Western Sugar factory in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, was £10.2 million.

European profits rose 6 per cent to £152.5 million.

Times, page 30

Standard link with Westpac

By ADAM JONES

STANDARD CHARTERED, the international bank, is to join forces in East Asia with Westpac Banking Corporation, the second largest Australian bank.

Westpac will use Standard Chartered's established network in the region to provide banking services for Asian customers, including lending and trade finance facilities. The deal should produce profits of between £5 million and £10 million in the first year, according to one analyst.

Initially, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Hong Kong will be targeted because of their links to business in Australia and New Zealand. The strategic relationship will give Westpac customers the largest Asian coverage offered by an Australian bank.

There will be no exchange of equity between the two parties. Standard Chartered, has signed similar strategic partnership deals with US banks, including one with First Chicago NBD two weeks ago.

Approval sought for drug

By ERIC ROSELY

BRITISH BIOTECH, the biotechnology company, is seeking regulatory approval for its first drug and expects commercial sales to begin in 1998.

The drug, an acute pancreatitis treatment called Lixapan, whose clinical trials in Europe have just finished, is to be submitted to the European Medicines Evaluation Agency before March. It will probably be submitted to the US Food and Drug Administration in 1998.

James Noble, finance director, said that the company would have to spend about £10 million of its £195 million in cash reserves to market Lixapan, which will have the commercial name of Zacten.

The company reported a pre-tax loss of £16.1 million in the first half, against a loss of £11 million previously, partly because of higher spending on research and development. The shares finished at 223½p, up ½p.

Whitbread pays £46m for BrightReasons

WHITBREAD, the leisure and drinks company, yesterday continued its move into the restaurant trade with the £46 million purchase of BrightReasons group, owner of Bella Pasta and Pizzaland (Alasdair Murray writes).

David Thomas, managing director of Whitbread's restaurant and leisure division, said the company is aiming to expand Bella Pasta quickly. The 104 Pizzaland sites are to be converted to other Whitbread brands. Bright-

Reasons' Pizza Piazza chain will be sold to prevent conflict of interest with Whitbread's Pizza Hut. Whitbread recently purchased Pelican for £137 million and is keen to roll out its brands, which include Dime and Café Rouge, across the country.

BrightReasons was founded in 1990 after Michael Guthrie, former head of Mecca Leisure, led a buyout of the restaurants from Grand Metropolitan. He invested £200,000 and is expected to realise about £5 million.

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Shares beat the retreat as profit-takers move in

ATTEMPTS to extend the equity market's strong run on the back of the Budget proposals faltered after the profit-takers moved in.

An early mark-up of almost 17 points soon evaporated as City pundits reached the conclusion that the expected boom in consumer spending was likely to lead to another rise in interest rates sooner rather than later.

In the event, the FT-SE 100 index moved into reverse, falling almost 30 points to 5300 on Wall Street opened with further losses. The index closed 19.2 down at 4,049.2 in thin volumes that saw a total of 714 million shares traded.

The setback for the index might have been worse had it not been for speculative buying of SmithKline Beecham, up 29.5p to 808.5p on turnover of six million shares, on talk that Roche might be poised to bid. It followed reports that the Swiss pharmaceutical giant had applied to its American bankers to extend lines of credit.

At these levels, SmithKline Beecham carries a price tag of £21 billion. Roche declined to comment on the claims. In the past it has also been linked with Zeneca, down 11p at £16.67p.

One of the best moves on the day was recorded in T&N, up 32p at 176.5p as it announced it was writing off £373 million to limit its liability to asbestos claims. Under the scheme the group will ring-fence future claims with extra insurance cover worth up to £500 million. Brokers are now talking the price up to the 200p level. By the close of business more than 11 million shares had changed hands.

Redland dropped 30p to 364.5p after warning that fourth-quarter volumes in Germany were not matching expectations. The pound's strength against the mark was also giving cause for concern.

The profits setback at Tate & Lyle was no worse than expected and an upbeat statement about the outlook for the depressed US market lifted the shares 9p to 479p.

Dhows set a further 3p to 547.5p, stretching the falls during the past two days to 23p. This follows the Chancellor's decision to effectively raise the tax relating to payments on extended warranties. Brokers say the move may also affect Kingsfisher, down 4p at 620.5p and Thorne,



The rise in excise duty on alcopops hit Bass and Merrydown

61p off at 272.5p. National Westminster Bank may be another casualty of the move through its Lombard leasing subsidiary, it fell 13p to 683.5p.

The 40 per cent increase in excise duty on "alcopops" - alcoholic lemonades - left Bass, which makes Hoopers Hooch, 20p down at 790.5p, and Merrydown, which makes Two Dogs, 5p off at 465p.

Fading bid hopes left British Gas another 10p lower at 221p. Earlier this week Shell

the second year running with useful gains. Burns Stewart firming 1.5p to 71p. Glenmoleague's 20p to 825p, and Highland Distilleries 4p to 337.5p. But profit-taking left Guinness 6.5p lower at 452p, and Grand Metropolitan 5.5p off at 465p.

Fading bid hopes left British Gas another 10p lower at 221p. Earlier this week Shell

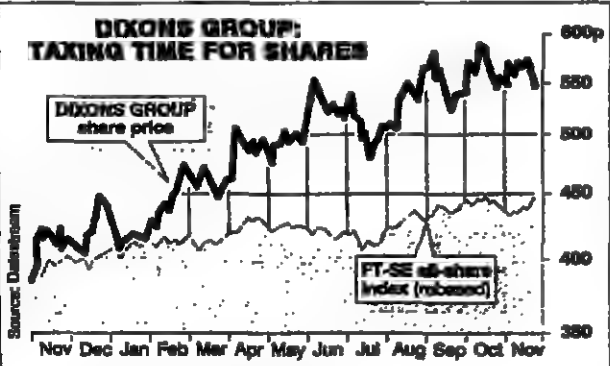
Hanson rose 1.4p to 80p on a turnover of 15.6 million after claims that a break-up bid for the group of the company may be coming. Hanson has already divested Imperial Tobacco and Millennium, leaving Energy Group and some building products interests. With the shares depressed, Hanson may be vulnerable.

93.5p. Matthew Clark, the drinks distributor, firmed 1p to 294p. Its shares fell sharply earlier this year after it said that profits had been hit by the increased competition from alcopops. HP Bulmer also drew strength from the increased duty with a rise of 8p to 542.5p.

The smaller distillers celebrated the 4 per cent reduction in duty on a bottle of Scotch for

denied recent reports by ruling out the prospect of a merger with British Gas. Brokers say British Gas is also a casualty of Budget measures to squeeze capital allowances on long-life assets. Shell fell 12p to 988.5p.

Sevens Treat is another company that could suffer from the squeeze on capital allowances. The shares fell 6.5p to 660p after figures on



DIXONS GROUP: TAKING TIME FOR SHARES

Tuesday, Meyer International tumbled 17p to 370.5p after it emerged that the expected pick-up in trading at Jewson, the newly refurbished chain of builders' merchants, was not now expected until the final quarter of the year. Brokers had been hoping for the benefits to become apparent at the start of the second half.

Forward Group fell 6.5p to 103.5p as a line of 121,552 shares under the rate of 105p, a discount to the ruling price. The shares fell recently after a profits warning.

Vibropact, the plant hire group, slipped 2p to 66.5p after plunging into the red at the half-way stage. The setback was attributed to depressed conditions and the cost of restructuring.

The Oriental Restaurant Group firmed 2p to 240.5p on the back of a useful increase in half-year profits. A rise in profits also lifted Kewell Systems 25p to 482.5p. Crabtree Group held steady at 242p in spite of a steep profits decline last year from £4.9 million to £2.6 million.

News of the link-up with Bill Gates's Microsoft lifted Internet Technology Group 6p to 49.5p. Under the terms of the deal users of Windows 95 will be able gain access to the Internet via ITG's Global Internet service.

GILT-EDGED: Investors in the bond market began picking holes in the Budget's proposals as worries about another rise in interest rates resurfaced. Some claimed that the Chancellor's targets were unlikely to be achieved.

Details of the next auction finally capped a lacklustre session and sent prices heading south the rest of the day. The Bank of England intends to issue £2.5 billion of Treasury 7 per cent 2002. The issue is less than forecast in some quarters, but this did nothing to improve sentiment.

In the futures pit, the December series of the Long Gilt finished 17.5 lower at £110.92 as the total number of contracts reached 102,000.

In long, Treasury 8 per cent 2015 fell 1.5p at £103.12, while among shorter dated coupons, Treasury 8 per cent 2000 eased 0.5p to £103.12.

NEW YORK: US stocks were mostly weaker in quiet pre-Thanksgiving holiday trading. At midday, the Dow Jones industrial average was down 30.93 points to 6,497.48.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday): Dow Jones 6497.48 (-30.93) S&P Composite 754.57 (-1.39)

Tokyo: Nikkei Average 2145.28 (-72.57)

Hong Kong: Hang Seng 1350.95 (-45.62)

Amsterdam: AEX 618.40 (-8.70)

Sydney: ASX 2276.7 (-5.3)

Frankfurt: DAX 2791.05 (-15.61)

Singapore: SSEC 2220.36 (-40.48)

Brussels: C20 6328.64 (-52.68)

Paris: CAC 40 2270.77 (-4.31)

Zurich: SMI 815.10 (-7.00)

London: FT 30 2020.4 (-12.8)

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T&N's insulation package

OVER the top might best describe T&N's package of provisions and insurance against asbestos-related injury claims. In total, the motor components group has erected a fence around the asbestos problem high enough to cover £1.3 billion worth of claims from future asbestos sufferers. That is about double the worst-case prognosis for the company.

But you can hardly criticise T&N for a belt and braces approach. The asbestos legacy has deprived the company's cashflow of some £50 million a year. To its great credit, T&N has coped well with the problem and developed a leading components maker whose main purpose so far has been to finance a stream of personal injury claims. Locked within is the potential for a more dynamic and successful company which until now has not had the financial clout to build on its portfolio of

motor component businesses. T&N's pursuit of Kolbenschmidt will be revived, although the company needs somewhere to park its option on the German piston company, which expires in December.

The writedown of £373 million looks dramatic, but will not affect cashflow, barring the £92 million insurance premium. Moreover, T&N is building a separate cash fund to pay off claims, replacing the annual asbestos write-off with a one-off provision will improve dividend cover.

But for shareholders, the immediate effect could be to put T&N in play. Every merchant bank in the City has at one time or another sought to arrange a bid for the company, but asbestos has so far proved to be a good repellent. By sweeping the dust into a bin, T&N has made itself a much cleaner target.

Tate & Lyle

LAST YEAR Tate & Lyle was

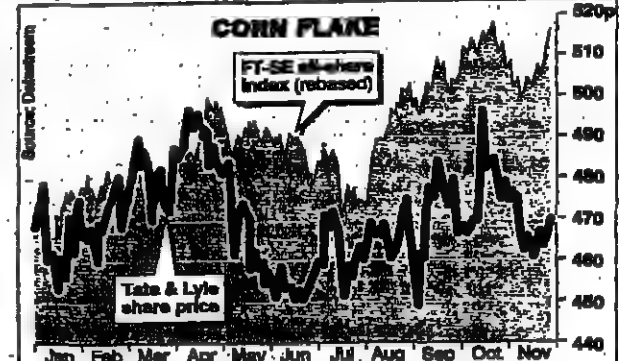
praised by rising corn prices. Today the threat is from falling corn prices. This is the topsy-turvy world of Staley, the American milling business that uses corn to make sweeteners used in soft drinks.

Staley's contribution to Tate & Lyle's profits, close to £150 million in the year to September 31, fell back to an estimated £70 million last year. Corn doubled in price, to \$5 a bushel, and Staley was unable to persuade Coca-Cola and Pepsi to swallow it. The problems were exacerbated by excess milling capacity and low gasoline prices, which prevented Staley switching fructose production over to ethanol.

Two out of the three problems have eased. Gasoline prices have risen sharply

meagre recovery. Yet Tate & Lyle's long-term prospects remain solid.

The first substantial profits are beginning to flow from investments in emerging markets totalling £151 million. But until the fructose price negotiations are resolved in January, its shares are best left to those who enjoy a gamble.



CORN FLAKE

Redland

WHAT is to be done with Redland? Back in the summer life almost looked rosy and the share price was approaching £5. In July, the building materials group predicted improving volumes in the second half after agreeing to merge its roof tile operations with Braas and taking a majority share in the German company. As part of the restructuring, it sold its bricks business to Istock but in September the gloom set in again as the market realised that Redland had become even more exposed to soggy Continental markets.

Since then, Redland's share price has plunged to 364p, shedding most of the gains won from shuffling its bundle of bricks, blocks and tiles. Yesterday's trading statement cast more gloom on the proceedings with a warning about weak volumes in France, new product delays and the strength of sterling. The combined effect

should cause year-end profits to slip £20 million to £260 million, yet it would be easy to overplay the setback. The market should have factored in the effect of a stronger pound on a company exposed to the mark.

Ultimately, Redland is Braas: a play on a recovery in the Continental building sector. That will not happen quickly but Redland muddies the waters with its other investments in quarries and in the US. Eventually, a demerger of Braas is what the market hopes for.

Meyer

WHAT do John Major and Harry Langman have in common? Both are praying for a full recovery in the housing market. The Prime Minister's only hope of keeping his job after Ken Clarke's cautious Budget may be a surge in house prices to reinforce the "feel-good" factor. Mr Langman, the Meyer International chairman, is no less dependent on a housing recovery.

Announcing flat interim results, he reminded investors that improvements in housing starts and transactions should lead to increased demand for both timber and building materials. Mr Langman reckons improvement is on the way but the market is not convinced and worries that interest rates will soon rise. In a drifting market, Meyer will remain in limbo with the likelihood that bid speculation will return. Earlier this year, Wolsley, RMC and CRH were tipped as possible bidders for the company. Stronger building materials groups can profit in a sluggish period by purchasing market share. However, Meyer is not so blessed. Without such strong cash flow, acquisitions will not come to Meyer's rescue and it could find itself a bid target. Good news for investors, less so for Mr Langman.

EDITED BY CARL MORTIMER

COMMODITIES

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THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Time and tide wait for no one

ANYONE who may be wondering why Kenneth Clarke's tie was so tame in comparison to his jokes, read on.

In the panic that stemmed from the Budget leak, the Chancellor's tie was the last thing on his mind. A keen twit, Ken had intended to wear a personal favourite — a deep pink number, decorated with blue birds. In the frenzy, however, it was nowhere to be found.

The Chancellor was instead forced to wear a far more sober number, in deep blue with yellow leathers and red Lancaster roses. It was his Duchy of Lancaster tie, handed over from John Major in 1987.

History repeats

NEPOTISM isn't strictly a family affair. Take blue-blooded private bankers Robert Fleming who yesterday promoted chief executive John Manser, son and boy a Fleming's insider, to replace Robin Fleming as chairman of the ultimate parent company. Meanwhile William Garrett, also man and boy a Fleming, is to take over as chief executive. Not so surprising is the fact that Manser personally employed the Cambridge-educated Garrett, another law graduate, back in 1970.

A MOUNTAIN-MOVING report from the TUC, who would have guessed that the majority of today's trade unionists are male, over 25, live in the North, work full time and in large workplaces.



"Ofwat is quite right — we should mend our leaking pipes"

Wrong number

THE ailing House of Fraser not only misplaced a finance director yesterday, but also forgot its head office telephone number. The line listed on its Stock Exchange announcement was that of another troubled soul, The Independent newspaper. For future reference, John Coleman, chief executive at HoF, your company telephone number is 0171-963 2000.

Budget toast

THE old adage that accountants are boring took a battering yesterday as the bean counters met for their post-Budget get-togethers. Coopers & Lybrand employees tucked into an early morning full English breakfast at The Savoy, while suits from KPMG sat down to salmon and eggs 45 minutes later at The Brewery on Chiswell Street. Price Waterhouse celebrated on its premises, while Ernst & Young sipped cocktails at The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre. It was, however, a non-event at Arthur Andersen.

No one home

AS the Inland Revenue tries to recruit new taxmen, it might reflect on the hoards who have headed towards the private sector. Remember Andrew Nutbrown, at tax advisers Deloitte & Touche, and a former senior compliance officer like Michael Alcock, who is currently on trial for corruption. So did Mr Nutbrown make any visits to the famous room 607? "Unfortunately I went to room 71," he tells me. "No one was home."

MORAG PRESTON

Kenneth Clarke's claim that "good economics is good politics" looks premature. People who reject a pan-European currency on principle may think it a dangerous idea. The Chancellor's pre-election Budget does, however, suggest that bad economics will no longer win votes.

At last, it seems, we have learnt our lesson. Juicy pre-election handouts, however plausible they seem at the time, tend to come with invisible elastic attached that whangs them back to the Exchequer once the votes have been counted. Pre-election largesse often places a lasting bet on the economy too.

The ensuing damage leaves us worse off than we started, whether handouts are in the form of tax cuts, as in 1987, or popular spending pledges, as in 1992. What a pity the penny took so long to drop. A review of postwar Budgets compiled by Eric Waterhouse, the accountancy firm, shows that this was happening back in the 1950s. A cheerful tax-cutting Budget before the 1959 election was followed by a sternly tough one the following March. Further essays in the genre followed Budget days during the 1960s and 1970s. Tories were the chief exponents, if only because Labour lacked the skill to manipulate the electoral-economic cycle. Labour was addicted to spending pledges in Opposition. In the 1950s and 1970s, these brought crises a few years into their term of office and tough Budgets later on to repair the damage.

Voters learnt to avoid this trap sooner than the lure of vote-chasing tax cuts. By 1992, supposedly popular spending commit-

Realism becomes the sceptic voter's friend, at least on paper



GRAHAM SEARJEANT

ments had become such an electoral risk that Labour offered its own cod pre-election Budget to give them some credibility. Argument still rages on whether this cost Labour the election. It surely did not help.

The 1992 Budget finally broke voters' faith in Tory pre-election tax cuts. For better or worse, it hastened sterling's eviction from Europe's exchange-rate mechanism and exposed the sham of relying on a tax exchange rate discipline to do the work of economic management. Even on Treasury forecasts, the Budget deficit would have doubled in 1992-93 to £28 billion, then 4½ per cent of output. In the event, it was 6 per cent, with worse to come. The tax rises Labour now brandishes soon followed.

Under Tony Blair, Labour has necessarily made a virtue of caution on spending pledges. Mr Clarke has now espoused tax realism on behalf of Conservatives. This looks good news for Britain's economy. If voters shun something-for-nothing promises or quick fiscal fixes, the economy is much more likely to grow at a steady pace, without inflationary booms, or recessions made worse by government action. If, that is, good intentions are put into practice.

Labour's Treasury team is going to extremes to avoid spending pledges. Tories are trying just as hard to expose hidden ones. On the surface, Mr Clarke's Budget is exemplary. It contains only a muted £700 million net in pre-election tax concessions and raises revenue in ways that avoid putting up prices and welfare spending. With brazen honesty, it also publishes in advance the traditional post-election tax rises: in this case on profit-related pay, air tickets, investment by utilities and new oil wells. This is not the scorched-earth Budget some Tory defeatists

wanted. On Treasury figures, what appears to be a mildly tax-cutting Budget would raise the total tax burden from 37½ per cent of national income this year to 38½ per cent in 1999-2000. By then, on plan, the percentage of national income spent by government would also have fallen by three points, taking the Budget at last back into balance.

The millennium is, however, the ultimate example of the "medium term". Regular readers of the annual Budget Red Book know that all things are projected to balance in the medium term. Of late, sadly, this tends to move back a year every twelve months. In the 1995-96 Red Book, the deficit was to fall from £21½ billion that year to £13 billion in 1996-97 and £5 billion in 1997-98. Two years later, with no shocks intervening, borrowing is projected to fall from £26½ billion in 1996-97 to £19 billion in 1997-98 and £12 billion in 1998-99.

The projected cut to £19 billion, steeper than anticipated, would bring the deficit under the maximum 3 per cent of output laid down in the Maastricht treaty for any EU country not actually in recession, as well as being a condition for EMU. Mr Clarke is understandably proud of qualifying, on

paper. It is no dead certainty that the UK will qualify when actual figures are added up 15 months hence. The plans rely on nearly £1 billion from closing tax loopholes and on economic growth accelerating from 2½ to 3½ per cent, albeit in line with independent forecasts.

Britain perennially assumes that European currency rules should apply strictly to others but scarcely at all to us, one reason why the ERM experiment failed. Regardless of EU tests, however, borrowing even 2½ per cent of national income after six straight years of growth is not sensible according to the Government's own lights. By then, the books should balance (as projected in the 1995 Red Book) if borrowing is to average less than 3 per cent over the economic cycle. Even if the world economy has entered a golden age by grace of the US Federal Reserve Board, as Wall Street bulls argue, there will still be growth cycles as variation in sales, stocks and capital spending interact. Cycles will just be shallower.

For that reason, as much as experience, no credence can be given to the Budget's medium-term projections. As the Institute for Fiscal Studies notes, spending figures look too optimistic. Maybe that does not matter. High borrowing, high taxes, and low growth may be acceptable, to avoid currency, inflation or interest rate crises. Raising the growth rate depends on a virtuous circle of tax cuts that in turn cut social security spending. These reforms will only be possible when the medium term arrives. Realistically, don't wait for it.

Auntie's transmission sale turns sour

The prospect of an American hold on BBC broadcast facilities fuels monopoly fears, says Eric Reguly



Bob Phillips, the BBC's Deputy Director-General, who has the task of selecting one of the four bidders to run the transmission service

The privatisation of the BBC's transmission service, a sale that Auntie hoped would be clean, quick and simple, is turning nasty. No one particularly opposes the sale; the problem lies in the identity of the expected purchaser, an American cable company called International CableTel.

Many organisations and companies, including the Independent Television Association (ITVA) and British Telecom, are wary of CableTel for the simple reason that a victory would give it a monopoly on all terrestrial TV transmissions and a significant chunk of radio and mobile-telephone traffic. CableTel already owns NTL, which is the BBC service's only competitor.

The critics say that, a CableTel monopoly would work against the public interest. They fear that the lack of competition will lead to higher transmission costs for broadcasters, leaving less money for programming and other services, and detract from technological innovation.

If CableTel wins, it will control the transmissions for the two BBC TV channels, the five BBC national radio stations, and the Virgin, Talk Radio and Classic FM commercial stations. Through NTL, it already supplies transmission services for the ITV

companies and Channel 4 and will do same for Channel 5 when it launches. The combined companies would have an annual turnover of more than £170 million and be at the forefront of the digital TV revolution, the next big growth area in the industry.

In a submission to Ofcom, BT said: "If NTL were to acquire (the BBC service), then all prospects for any competition to terrestrial transmission would be eliminated... This will become more significant after the move to digital, when more channels will become available."

Four bids for the BBC transmission system, comprised of the home service network and the much smaller world service network, which transmits the BBC World Service, landed yesterday on the desk of Bob Phillips, the Deputy Director-General, and Le-

man Brothers, his financial adviser. They will pick the winner no later than Christmas and possibly as early as next week.

The four were CableTel; a consortium led by Securitor, the security and telecoms company, whose members include the HSBC and NatWest banks; a BBC management group backed by Mercury Asset Management; and a consortium led by Castle Tower Corp, an American builder of transmission towers, that includes France Telecom and three US and British venture capital firms.

The BBC service has a book value of £210 million and Securitor, the BBC managers and Castle Tower are thought to have submitted bids within £10 million of that amount. There is a good chance that CableTel came in somewhat higher. Its rivals believe that

CableTel, tempted by the prospect of controlling a monopoly business, would not risk anything less than a knockout price. Indeed, the American company could recoup much of the bid premium by reducing costs through the merger of the NTL and BBC systems.

Of the rival bidders, only Mercury Asset Management has gone on the record with its concerns about a possible CableTel victory. Mercury knows the transmission business well. It bought NTL, then known as the Independent Broadcasting Authority, when it was privatised in 1991, and sold it to CableTel for £235 million in March. It was one of the savviest investments by Carol Galley, Mercury's vice-chairman and chief strategist. Mercury booked a profit of £165 million on the NTL sale.

In a submission to Ofcom, Nick Turner, a Mercury direc-

tor, said: "Only with [NTL and the BBC service] kept separate can competition be expected to restrain prices and ensure the service quality and innovation required by customers. This will be particularly important during the development of digital services, when major investments will be made and significant sunk costs may be incurred."

The BBC wants a high price because it needs the money to help fund its move from analogue to digital services. The BBC will initially duplicate the existing BBC1 and BBC2 analogue services with digital transmissions and eventually offer a range of new digital channels, including subscription and interactive services. Getting a high price has become all the more urgent because it appears that the BBC is having trouble

convincing the Government that the annual licence fee, its main source of revenue, should be raised faster than the inflation rate.

Those who oppose a CableTel monopoly have not found an ally in Ofcom, the telecoms regulator. Ofcom has argued that the transmission market, with only two players, was not very competitive to begin with. Furthermore, as a regulator with vast experience in regulating dominant businesses, notably BT, it has the power to keep monopolies honest. Ofcom's comments alarmed some bidders. One even considered withdrawing because it regarded Ofcom's position as an effective endorsement of CableTel's bid.

CableTel has its supporters. One is Channel 4, which uses CableTel's NTL division to deliver its broadcasts. Frank McGettigan, Channel 4's di-

rector and general manager, said: "If NTL and the BBC transmission systems merge, there will be cost savings that can be passed on to us. I just want to save money."

Indeed, CableTel has said that merging the NTL and BBC systems would create considerable cost savings. These savings, it said, could finance discounts of £4 million to £5 million a year to the independent TV broadcasters.

The Independent Television Association is not a believer. Barry Cox, director of the ITVA, thinks CableTel could afford to offer much higher discounts if it wins the BBC service. "We recognize that there could be savings from a monopoly," he said. "But it would be up to the regulator to ensure there is clarity in NTL's accounts if it wins so that we can be reassured that the savings from a regulated monopoly will be passed on."

Ofcom, however, has indicated that it probably would not force NTL to "unbundle" its tariffs, a process that would expose the true costs associated with the various transmission charges.

Although it appears that CableTel has the best chance of emerging as the winner, the game is not necessarily over. Mercury Asset Management has sent a letter to the Office of Fair Trading, outlining its concerns about the potential loss of competition in the transmission market. Castle Tower and Securitor have done the same. Their goal is to trigger a Monopolies and Mergers Commission referral, a process that would put the BBC sale in limbo for half a year or more. But with Ofcom apparently neutral on the monopoly question, they should not get their hopes up.

How Bain found the brawn to fight back from the brink

Jon Ashworth on why Guinness was not good for business

When Ernest Saunders arrived at Guinness in 1981, he approached all the leading management consultants and asked each of them the same question: "If you are the best, who is second best?" Each gave the same answer: Bain & Company.

The firm would live to regret that contract. On Sunday it will be exactly ten years since the Department of Trade and Industry raided Guinness's headquarters at Portman Square, west London. The ensuing investigation fuelled one of the City's blackest episodes, and started a chain of events that have yet to reach their denouement. Mr Saunders awaits the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg as to whether it will uphold his claim that he was denied a fair trial.

Ten years on, Bain & Co remains equally haunted by Guinness. It did not help that one of its own, Olivier Roux, surfaced as the star prosecution witness in what was dubbed the trial of the century.

But times have changed, and Bain, an entirely new firm, is starting to regain its old confidence. Few of the original staff remain, the break with the past made through a management buyout in 1991. Revenues since have grown at between 30 and 35 per cent a year, helping Bain to earn a reputed \$400 million or more a year in fees.

Robin Buchanan, senior partner in Bain's London office, is anxious to debunk some of the more enduring myths about the firm. Take Bain's reputation for "secretiveness", which he puts down to an obsession with confidentiality.

"It's not surprising for the media to come in and say total confidentiality equals secretiveness," he says, chatting over coffee in Bain's headquarters near Marble Arch, central London. He insists that Mr Roux's secondment from Bain to the post of Guinness finance director was a one-off. Staff are

results to shareholders that count.

It was with results in mind that Bill Bain set up the eponymous firm in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1973. Since then, consulting has evolved from the straightforward "helping companies create change" to embracing the importance of company strategy.

Bain thought all that meaningless unless you got results. It decided to concentrate on solid, fact-based, advice. Mr Buchanan said that up until that point, consultants had gone off to do "their thing", before making a final presentation to say "this is what you have to do to save your company, or to take over the market, or whatever it might be". It all went smoothly enough until the 1980s, when the then partners borrowed heavily to fund an employee stock ownership plan. Bain's balance sheet became grossly overvalued, the Gulf war led to a slump in business, and the firm's health suffered severely. The hangover from Guinness did not help. The MBO changed all



Buchanan: no dress code

that. Today, Bain is arguably as strong as it was, working for the likes of Eastern Group and BAT Industries, and advising Gucci on its recent stock market issue. Nearly half its assignments in the UK this year have involved FT-SE 100 companies. Youngsters still in short trousers at the time of the Guinness affair are now hammering on Bain's door. The firm has been known to receive as many as 100 CVs in a day. About a third of new recruits are graduates, working as analysts for two or three years before attending business school.

A breeding ground for egos, one fears, but Mr Buchanan insists otherwise. "Yes, we're looking for brains; yes, we're looking for energy and enthusiasm; but we're also looking for people who can work well in teams. The idea that some young, hotshot, arrogant so-and-so can come in and tell a client how to run his or her business is absolute anathema to us." He is candid enough to admit the dangers. "If you hire outstanding people... the chances are they are going to think they are outstanding." Clients are canvassed regularly to help to keep egos under control.

And so one comes back to Guinness, which reputedly earned the firm £13 million in fees in just three years. Under its guidance, Guinness sold off interests in everything from snake serum to health farms, transforming the group through the takeover of Bell's Whisky and Distillers. By October 1991, when Guinness shares were split, the share price had risen from less than £1 to more than £10. Not bad for second best.

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PRUDENTIAL

ACCOUNTANCY

Will taxman's gloves come off?

Self-assessment could change the relationship between taxpayers and the Revenue, David Frost says

It is not in human nature to reflect upon the good features of the nation's taxation system, which is why British taxpayers may not always appreciate that they have been living in a fairly gentle period in tax history.

The Inland Revenue has spent time and money in re-educating its staff to become more aware of the need for good public relations. Within their offices they even refer to you and me these days as "customers". A climate of tolerance and understanding has developed between taxpayers, their advisers and the taxman.

So when a cheerful little taxation gentleman in bowler and pinstripes started appearing on television screens to tell the public about a self-assessment regime for nine million taxpayers it may have appeared, at first, to be just another friendly gesture from the Revenue.

The truth is, however, that our television hero is simply the front man for a system that, for some, could turn out to be very tough indeed.

Judging by the experience of other countries that have introduced self-assessment, it is possible that relations between taxpayers and the Revenue could become strained

and adversarial in nature. That is sad, but true.

The Chartered Institute of Taxation, with a members in both the private and public sectors, has been alert to what I have called "the adversarial road to conflict" from the moment self-assessment was first mooted.

We are encouraging the Revenue to apply a light touch when dealing with taxpayers and their advisers during the first few years of the new system. We believe that if the system is to work properly, it is essential that the Revenue should be both gentle and sensitive. We realise that we are asking a lot of a system that is reliant on computers.

The adversarial principle is almost enshrined in the self-assessment system. The taxpayer is responsible for completion of the self-assessment tax return. He or she has a choice whether to compute the tax liability or ask the Revenue to make the calculations.

Whichever route is chosen, the taxpayer stands a chance of being audited — either by random selection or by being specifically targeted. It is at this point that the adversarial noises can be heard in the distance. Clients of profession-



David Frost is concerned the gentle era is about to end

al tax advisers selected for audit will often not understand why they have been picked out. Has their adviser let them down, for instance?

Furthermore, if a tax inspector has a specific area of a tax return in which he wants further information, will he raise every other conceivable question at the same time? We have already heard rumours that this may be likely and, if true, it will contribute to the risk of adversarial stances.

Good relations between the

adversarial situation. That is something we as a nation could well do without when we are about to enter the next millennium in a state of reasonable prosperity with high hopes for the nation's economic future.

A great many honourable and highly motivated professional people have worked together inside and outside government to create the sophisticated and, I would claim, highly efficient tax system that we have in Britain today.

The risk we face is that the current good relations we have between the taxed and the taxers will be spoiled by the remorseless generation of automatic fixed-interest penalties and interest charges by computer, and audits that will be worrying for the taxpayers selected. The Chartered Institute of Taxation will continue its discussions with the Revenue with a view to achieving a system that is as free as possible from conflict.

I would end by quoting John Ruskin: "Government and co-operation are in all things the laws of life: anarchy and competition the laws of death." It would be a great pity if the introduction of self-assessment spoiled the present good relations that exist between the Revenue and the tax profession and the public at large. It must not be allowed to do this — the Chartered Institute of Taxation will do all it can to ensure that it does not.

The author is President of The Chartered Institute of Taxation

An obligatory review is the only answer

It is tough being a regulator. If you provide solid financial reporting rules, companies complain that they have been locked in a straitjacket. But if you provide simple guidelines and ask that their spirit is observed most people either ignore them or, at the very best, allow the issues to drift.

This is what seems to be happening with the concept of operating and financial reviews (OFR). Theoretically, these should be the most useful parts of a set of annual report and accounts. They are intended to provide the sort of information that allows investors and analysts to make up their own minds. But, by their very nature, it would be hard to lay down exact information that companies should include in them.

So the Accounting Standards Board (ASB), wisely put forward the concept, and provided extensive guidance, but left it up to companies to get on with it. Good practice, it was felt, would be a better influence than the heavy hand of sub-section 4, paragraph 78a.

And, again theoretically, a good, extensive and articulate OFR would do wonders for a company. Anything that promoted greater understanding between a company and the investment community should, you would have thought, have been welcomed by companies generally.

But when reports and accounts are analysed, a different story comes to the surface. Company Reporting, an organisation based in Edinburgh, has looked at what 600 companies on its database have done about an OFR. And its report makes depressing reading.

Quite rightly, it takes the essence of the ASB's thinking as its benchmark. The purpose of the OFR is to "discuss and analyse the business's performance and the factors underlying its results and financial position, in order to assist users to assess for themselves the future potential of the business" and it "should include only matters that are likely to be significant to investors".

That is clear enough. A user of the accounts, an institutional investor for example, should find information in the OFR that cannot be found elsewhere and which gives an indication of future performance. The content of the OFR will be clear, sharp, specific and focused. That, after all, is what analysts want.

Now read this section from the last report and accounts from Commercial Union. "New

challenges will arise from the economic market and regulatory changes that are occurring with increasing frequency in many parts of the world. I believe the group has the people with the skills to meet these new challenges and take advantage of new opportunities, thereby providing the progressive increase in shareholder value which is our aim." It puts you in mind of the old Lord Onslow editorials in *Private Eye* that would end a section of old trouser flannel with a note to the sub-editors to insert another three paragraphs of the same old guff.

Or as Company Reporting says of the Commercial Union effort it "is typical of the kind of bland unsubstantiated optimism that, we are told, so annoys analysts".

Company Reporting found little agreement among companies on what information they felt they should provide. Only two areas of information appeared in more than 50 per cent of company reports on its database — discussions of the profit and loss account and



ROBERT BRUCE

divisional analysis. Neither exactly comes under the heading of information that could not be gleaned from elsewhere in the report. "A simple restatement of figures included elsewhere in the financial statements does not add value for analysts," Company Reporting points out. The next most frequently provided information is that on treasury matters, which 35 per cent provide. As for risk, which you might have considered the key matter to be discussed in any OFR, only 1 per cent covered the topic, and then mostly from a treasury angle.

Company Reporting also contacted analysts to see what they thought of the value of OFRs. "The analysts that we spoke to," it said, "find that the volatile and unstructured nature of the content of the OFRs detracts enormously from their value."

Companies pay great lip-service to keeping institutional shareholders informed. But the reality is that they treat them with great cynicism. "It is hardly surprising," concludes Company Reporting, "that when given a free rein to include more or less what they want, companies will choose to disclose only those items that show them in a positive light."

There is only one answer. At the recent English ICA conference on corporate governance, Tom Ross, chairman of the National Association of Pension Funds, said that OFRs should be made obligatory.

Touche laments loss of table

THE "Big Six" accountancy firms seem to have got themselves into a terrible tangle over their annual figures. For years they published a boded statement of their fees in early June, and a league table was duly put together. However, in January, KPMG made its audit division a plc and unilaterally issued figures in a form of report and accounts. As a result, the other firms decided

to stop publishing a league table in June. But their stand has rebounded. When Deloitte & Touche produced good strong figures last week it suggested that it might, at last, have overtaken Price Waterhouse. But as no one has seen any United Kingdom figures from Price Waterhouse for almost 18 months no one is any the wiser. Touche is fuming.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Merger mania

ANYONE who doubts that the professions are doing pretty well, whatever the Budget may have done to them, should look at the latest survey from Smith & Williamson. One of its specialists is advising partnerships and each year it does a survey of what is on partnerships' minds. The

firm covers architects, surveyors, solicitors and engineers, as well as accountants. And the answer is mergers and acquisitions. In the past two years, 77 per cent considered a merger, while 91 per cent considered an acquisition.

Cash at sea

NEVER let the Inland Revenue tell you that it treats all

taxpayers equally. The evidence that it does not is framed on its own walls. In the Nelson Room, which is one of the grandest sections of Somerset House, it exhibits copies of the final statements of affairs for Jane Austen and Lord Nelson. Jane Austen was found to have died with £25 classified as "cash in house". Nelson left rather more. But his form was amended. The word "house" was crossed out and "sea trunk" inserted.

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157	100	ABN Lab	91%	7.5	117	100	Abnight	98%	3	15.4
158	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	118	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
159	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	119	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
160	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	120	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
161	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	121	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
162	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	122	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
163	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	123	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
164	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	124	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
165	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	125	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
166	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	126	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
167	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	127	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
168	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	128	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
169	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	129	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
170	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	130	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
171	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	131	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
172	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	132	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
173	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	133	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
174	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	134	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
175	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	135	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
176	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	136	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
177	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	137	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
178	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	138	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
179	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	139	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
180	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	140	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
181	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	141	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
182	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	142	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
183	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	143	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
184	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	144	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
185	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	145	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
186	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	146	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
187	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	147	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
188	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	148	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
189	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	149	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
190	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	150	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
191	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	151	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
192	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	152	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
193	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	153	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
194	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	154	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4
195	100	ADP Admin Exp Sels	98%	2.2	155	100	Adm	98%	3	15.4

69%	68	MEBCO Sales	487%	152	155	Auto Parts	171	18	07
68%	67	W. Ry. Gen. U.	78	119	97	Auto. Equip.	170	31	31
68%	66	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
68%	65	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
68%	64	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
68%	63	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
68%	62	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
68%	61	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
68%	60	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
68%	59	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
68%	58	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
68%	57	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
68%	56	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
68%	55	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
68%	54	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
68%	53	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
68%	52	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
68%	51	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
68%	50	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
68%	49	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
68%	48	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
68%	47	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
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68%	36	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
68%	35	W. Ry. Equip. U.	78	90	137	Auto. Equip.	169	31	31
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Michael Binyon, Diplomatic Editor, looks at how Gibraltar has cracked down on crime and is determined to stand on its own feet

The Rock shows a stiff upper lip

Britain breathed a sigh of relief when Peter Caruana was elected the new Chief Minister in Gibraltar. Relations with Joe Bossano, his predecessor, had become so strained that there was talk two years ago of Britain imposing direct rule on its last remaining colony in Europe.

Now, Britain believes, the Gibraltar Government is committed to firm action on the issues that were giving the Rock an unsavoury reputation: drug smuggling, money laundering and the re-export of cut-price cigarettes to Spain. And when José María Aznar, the Spanish Prime Minister, began talks with John Major yesterday, Britain pointed to the new Gibraltar Government's determined efforts to crack down on all the illegal activities that had contributed to the latest confrontation with Spain.

Mr Caruana freely admits that Gibraltar needed to change its laissez faire ways. The blind eye turned to the tobacco and drug smuggling by speedboats using Gibraltar harbour did the Rock enormous harm. "We were seen as a place that was off the rails and off the tracks," he said.

Recent legislation has not only tightened police surveillance, but has made it an offence even to keep such boats in harbour. Gibraltar is committed to cross-border co-operation with Spain to stop smuggling, has promised to enforce European Union directives to prevent money laundering and will clear the backlog of EU legislation that was making Gibraltar a loop-

hole in the European Union, of which it is a full member. All this, the new Chief Minister believes, should improve Gibraltar's relations with both Spain and Britain. For Mr Caruana has a full agenda of what he wants from both countries.

With Britain, which, as the colonial power, still has responsibility for Gibraltar's defence and foreign policy, the Chief Minister believes a change of constitutional relationship is now overdue. The dependent territory is already largely self-governing, but wants to remove all vestiges of colonial rule. This would mean a new constitution to reflect modern practices, a change in the Governor's powers and the ending of appointment by London of unelected officials.

Mr Caruana does not envisage complete independence. "I have no agenda for breaking the political links with London," he said on a recent visit here. "What we want is the process of decolonisation." He has in mind the kind of status now enjoyed by the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man. Gibraltar would remain within the EU, but only the 30,000 people living there could decide its future.

Gibraltar insists that its sovereignty is non-negotiable. It also wants to exercise the right it obtained in the formula devised by Douglas Hurd, the former Foreign Secretary, to make its voice heard in any Anglo-Spanish talks on its future. The formula — "two flags, three voices" — is being taken on the Rock as a way of ensuring that nothing is negotiated above the heads of the



Military beat a British-style PC at the annual parade, attended by the Governor of Gibraltar

inhabitants. "The ultimate test is whether our consent would be needed on any issue," Mr Caruana said.

For him, Gibraltar's long-term future would be as a permanently separate territory enjoying good relations with Spain — a main plank of his electoral platform but one that he has found, to his frustration, hard to implement. Mr Caruana is deeply pessimistic about relations with Madrid. He says he is ready to build bridges, but finds that Spain is interested only in regaining sovereignty.

He complains bitterly that Spain still imposes an embargo on air and sea links, that it refuses to recognise Gibraltar as an integral part of the EU, and that Madrid loses no chance to thwart Gibraltar's attempts to become economically self-sufficient. All this, he says, hampers the efforts Gibraltar has made to find alternative employment after the rundown of the British forces. For whereas the Ministry of Defence accounted for 65 per cent of Gibraltar's economy a decade ago, the figure has fallen to 7 per cent and is to shrink to 5 per cent next year.

Gibraltar is therefore seeking to boost tourism, to become an international finance centre and to bolster its own industry. All this is hampered by continuing tough controls at the border and by Spain's refusal to recognise Gibraltar's identity cards.

For Spain, none of this touches on the central question: the return of Gibraltar to Spanish sovereignty. Señor Aznar acknowledges that Gibraltar has, at last, begun to crack down on smuggling. But he is unwilling to give Gibraltar any credit. For Madrid insists that there can be no quasi-independent status for

the Rock under the Treaty of Utrecht, which ceded sovereignty to Britain in 1713. Gibraltar must revert to Spanish control if Britain gives up its right to govern: there is no halfway house, as Gibraltar is now trying to negotiate.

Spain has renounced the hardline approach, symbolised by the total blockade imposed by Franco. It insists, however, that the so-called "Brussels talks", the regular discussions between London and Madrid on the Rock's future, must include the long-term question of sovereignty. And it believes it has the rest of the EU on its side.

The British, meanwhile, appear to be caught in the middle of the quarrel. There is an overriding British desire to improve relations with Madrid. But the Falklands have shown that doing so at the cost of Gibraltar's wishes can backfire. Britain cannot negotiate away the sovereignty of its few remaining colonies, and a strong Gibraltar lobby in Parliament keeps a close watch on Anglo-Spanish talks.

New challenge as the colony goes upmarket

Dominique

Searle on a

£5.2m revival

for the Rock

Gibraltar is investing millions in pursuit of quality tourism and developing its role as a financial centre. Much of the money is being spent upgrading hotels and airport and port facilities to broaden the Rock's appeal to the well-heeled visitor.

The reality for the Rock is that it is so small in the global tourism market that failure and success are very close to each other. But a distinct optimism in the industry is pulling all sectors together. Yacht marinas have got together to project themselves and value for money has become a watchword.

In the painful transition from a public to private sector economy there are signs that investment is about to pay dividends. Peter Montegriffo, the Minister heading the Department of Trade and Industry, points out that any visitor will see that Gibraltar's potential is remarkable.

"We are growing and therefore willing to give good investors the red carpet treatment they would not get in more saturated locations," he says. "Gibraltar is already a very attractive location for people who want to manufacture or export on a preferential basis outside high-tax jurisdiction."

In the Sixties, Gibraltar along with Tangier, enjoyed a heyday with upmarket visitors attracted by its casinos.

But that slumped when General Franco closed the border.

Spain liberalised and tourism boomed so that it has been difficult for Gibraltar to compete just to fill its 1,200 beds.

Joe Holliday, the aptly named Tourism Minister, elected with the Gibraltar Social Democrats last May, is a businessman who has vowed to spend the next four years turning Gibraltar's tourism around. The sum of £5.2 million out of a £72 million Government budget is being invested to promote the Rock and to refurbish access points and hotels.

Mr Holliday is concentrating on making the airport attractive and efficient and is raising the Ministry of Defence to lower landing charges so flight prices can drop. Travel will get a boost in the spring, when Monarch Airlines starts a scheduled service from Luton, and GB Airways expands its daily services from Heathrow and Gatwick.

Conferences with cruise liners have been set up and a new terminal built to make the passengers' arrival amid the mayhem of an industrial dockside a thing of the past.

Almost complete now is a refurbishment of Main Street, which, traditionally labelled itself the Oxford Street of the Costa del Sol, but is soon to acquire a Covent Garden look. That concept is central to Gibraltar's tourism plan.

The great benefit of having been a garrison until recently is that there are vast properties which lend themselves to touristic conversion. An amazing Royal Navy victualling yard, emptied of its food and Navy rum, is currently home to a touring exhibition on Ancient China.

Poised on a precipice above Rosia Bay, where Lord Nelson kept his fleet before Trafalgar and where his body was returned en route for burial in Britain, the plan is to turn the garrison into a maritime museum.

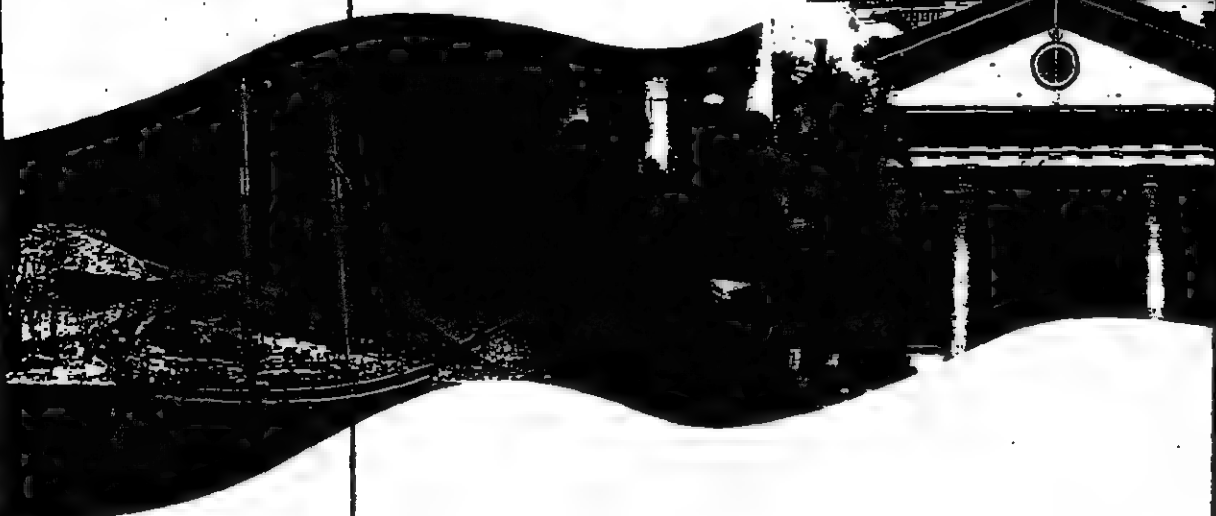
Miles of tunnels, former military walks in the nature reserve, weapons stores and grand colonial buildings are in line for imaginative projects. Even the apes are enjoying the buzz.

Former Navy vaults are to be converted to cottage industries. One already houses a very successful traditional English glass factory.



Taking the cable car to see the apes is one of the traditional tourist trips on Gibraltar

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Island Group

THEATRE 1

Peter Hall and Dominic Dromgoole unveil an Old Vic season with no fewer than 12 productions

THEATRE 2

... while in Stratford the RSC struggles to enliven Shakespeare's tame *Henry VIII*

THE TIMES ARTS

VISUAL ART

Our daily series on the V&A's Silver Galleries continues with the stunning Merode Cup

RISING STAR

Simon Smith has won a major playwriting award, but awaits a first performance

THEATRE: Benedict Nightingale on Peter Hall's ambitious new London project; and a Stratford opening

Old Vic, new direction

Sir Peter Hall, 66 just last week, has conceded it may be "my last big project before I hang up my clogs". Well, the Times-sponsored season of work he will formally announce today could make hefty demands on your foot- wear and mine, too. We will need to tramp up the Waterloo Road no fewer than 12 times between March and December 1997 if we are to catch Felicity Kendal and Michael Pennington in Granville Barker's *Waste*, Alan Howard and Ben Kingsley in *Waiting for Godot*, and the other four revivals and six new plays that Hall and his deputy, Dominic Dromgoole, are presenting at the Old Vic.

This is a project which should send plenty of adrenalin coursing round the ailing arteries of London's commercial theatre. It will allow some of the new young playwrights who emerged when Dromgoole was running the tiny Bush to prove that they have the imaginative size for a 1,000-seat Victorian theatre. It will give Hall the chance to put together the kind of acting ensemble he created at the RSC in the 1960s, but could never realise when he moved to the west-concrete canyons of the National. Not least, it will bring London something close to round the clock rep — and with a top ticket of £19, and special concessions for Times readers, not sub-West End prices.

The designer John Gunter is preparing a blue box for the Old Vic stage that will evoke anything from the sky to the walls of a living-room. Within this will be a wooden platform,

slightly thrust into the auditorium, that can be left empty, filled with chairs and tables, or furnished in some odd, non-naturalistic style. It will allow sets to be changed in just one hour, and that will enable Hall to schedule up to ten plays in a week that will often include matinee and evening performances on Sundays.

By late next autumn, when what Hall hopes will be the first of several seasons will be ending, openings will have ranged from the Alan Howard

6 If we have a policy, it's abundance and diversity

Lear to David Rabe's *Hurlyburly*, a satirical picture of the Hollywood jungle performed in New York by Sigourney Weaver and William Hurt from Hall's *Godot* to *Grace Note* by Samuel Adamson. Though Dromgoole is exactly half Hall's age, the two men have discovered their likes and dislikes to be pretty similar. "We're against showy, decorative theatre and also against the idea that to be radical you have to shock, shock, shock," says Dromgoole, who is responsible for the new plays. "The dramatists here are trying to be radically intelligent, radically humane, radically generous."

"If we have a policy, it's abundance and diversity,"

says Hall. "And as far as the revivals are concerned, I'm only interested in classics that I think have something to say to an audience at this minute."

Hence the choice of *Waste* to launch the season on March 4. Back in 1907 the play was banned, thanks to its candour about sex and politics. Twenty years later Granville Barker radically rewrote it, but until now his revised version has been neglected. "It's about sloven and the disintegration of government," says Hall. "In a general election year it should be an absolute humdinger."

N or will Felicity Kendal's appearance in this be a one-off. Though each new play will be cast separately, the revivals will draw on a pool of performers eventually likely to number up to 25. Hall knows that only if actors commit themselves for three plays or more can he begin to create something that no longer exists at the National, and has become increasingly elusive at the RSC: an ensemble.

"If you are working with people who know each other well, you can take more risks, work quicker, go deeper, push things further," says Hall. "You can give actors more opportunities and cast against expectation and type. In the early days of the RSC, who would have thought that the 5ft 10in Holm could play Prince Hal, or a Rank starlet called Donald Sinden would be the Duke of York, or Peggy Ashcroft could take Queen Margaret in *The Wars of the Roses* from the age of 17 to 75? Actors can be goodies in the



Peter Hall and (left) his deputy, Dominic Dromgoole: a simple new stage design will allow them to schedule up to ten plays in a week, including Sundays

afternoon and bobbies in the evening."

During 1997 we will see both the exciting young newcomer Victoria Hamilton and the veteran Geraldine McEwan. And who knows, they may be back again in 1998 and 1999 alongside Dame Judi Dench, who has displayed an interest in joining the ensemble. The impresario David Mirvish is presenting Hall and Dromgoole with the Old Vic and a production budget of some £700,000; but they will have to fill 65 per cent of seats if they are to break even. "It's a huge, huge risk," says Hall. "If I don't cover costs in the first year, there won't be a second."

Yet already the season is more ambitious than it was

going to be three months ago, when the plays and ensemble were expected to number 10 and 15 respectively. Indeed, the directors are talking of taking over a second but smaller theatre in order to present two new plays they cannot fit into their existing plans. But at the moment persuading audiences — and we want theatregoers of all ages, the young who go to the fringe, older people who find the West End a nightmare, everyone — to come once or twice a month to the Old Vic will be a challenge enough.

But both men seem avid for the fray. For Dromgoole, it is a chance to take striking new work "away from small boxes where it's in danger of being

marginalised". For the former director of the National, it means plenty too. "It means not having to close the theatre for days when you want to do a new play, not spending a great deal of money tearing down sets, not having to ask an actor to play *Lear* twice on the same day. It means staying in one place, being able to rehearse there, managing with a minute organisation, going to the pub with the company for lunch, not having a canteen committee and, thank God, not having to read the canteen committee's notes."

Times readers can obtain priority booking and special offers for the Old Vic season. Details will appear on the arts pages tomorrow

GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament
SIMON SMITH

Age: 27. Profession: Playwright. Background: "I studied directing at Dartington College, but when I left I realised that I was just another director with no experience." Current project: Smith has recently won the International Playwriting Festival's first prize for his first play, *Heir To The Estate*. What's it about? "It's set on New Year's Eve 1979, and it's an exploration of those who didn't manage to adapt to the coming years. Some people find it very Ortonesque, but I didn't really want that."



What did the judges like about it? They liked the play's "blackly comic dialogue, the vivid wholeheartedness of the characterisation, the gentle workings of the political allegory and the extraordinary fluency of the narrative". So far it has only had a reading, but the Croydon Warehouse has the first refusal. What next? "I look after our three-year-old son Oliver, so I find it difficult to concentrate, but I'm interested in doing something about our obsession with the millennium. And I might like to write screenplays one day."

GUY WALTERS

The one where Will keeps his head

Henry VIII
Swan, Stratford

Nobody knows whether Shakespeare wrote much, little or none of *Henry VIII*, or, assuming he had a collaborator, whether this was Fletcher or someone else. My own theory is that the Bard was so embarrassed by the task he had undertaken that he lunched every now and then into Dalek-verse, by way of disguising his involve-

ment. After all, he had to deal in upbeat, celebratory fashion with the father and mother of the great queen who had died only nine years before. What was he to make of the fact that the one had cut off the other's

head, and kept on marrying and murdering ever that?

The short answer is nothing. The play stops at the moment of Elizabeth's baptism, which is accompanied by general rejoicing and episcopal prophecies of wonders to come. In the last production I saw, Henry and Anne Boleyn (or as she is called here) Bullen clustered round the baby in a sentimental display of family togetherness. Gregory Doran's revival for the RSC is more pointed if less Shakespearean. Scarcely has David Collings's Crammer finished his patriotic beatings than Claire Marchionne's black-gowned Anne appears wrath-like behind Paul Jesson's big, smiling Henry. She apprehensively touches her neck, he looks a mite worried.

Well, well. Dr Johnson was probably right when he said that "the play keeps possession of the stage by reason of its pageantry" and not hugely exaggerating when he added that "the mock sorrows and virtuous distress of Katherine have furnished some scenes which may be justly numbered among the greatest efforts of tragedy". Pageantry is not what one associates with the Swan. But Doran puts Henry and his court in their cloth-of-gold mode when he can, opening the big rear doors to show a gilded horse, Anne with a shimmering coronation train, and glister galore.

He is also lucky to have a fine Katherine of Aragon in Jane Lapotaire, who brings patience, dignity and, in her



Paul Jesson as Henry, with Jane Lapotaire as Katherine, and Ian Hogg as Wolsey

final encounter with Cardinal Wolsey, a moving mix of queenly outrage and simple pain. Here Shakespeare reveals himself, as he surely also does in some of the scenes involving the "scarlet Satan" himself, played by Ian Hogg as the Ipswich butcher's son in excelsis: which means he has a very odd accent and the massive confidence of someone who can deal with whatever is waiting for him in the slaughterhouse, whether it is a bull or an English lord.

The play is episodic, but the episodes have purpose. Proud

men — Buckingham, Wolsey — discover humility in disaster. Jesson's splendidly bluff, blunt King learns to see through fake and value honesty. Yet a good cast and capable direction cannot disguise the fact that here and elsewhere the Bard, or Ur-Bard, is tying himself in some pretty comical knots in order to say the tactful thing.

The principals are all relentlessly goodmouthed. Everyone, including Anne, is nice about Katherine. Everyone is nice about Anne, calling her "virtuous" and "complete in

mind and feature". Likewise, but more so, with Henry and the infant Elizabeth. I must admit to being slightly sickened by all this post-hoc propagandising. Indeed, it leaves me wondering about the cannon that set the original Globe Theatre on fire at the premiere of a play that, believe it or not, was then titled *All Is True*. Was that cannon just a cannon? No, it was an historian, moralist and critic.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

Dance away

THE TIMES THEATRE CLUB

ary 17, the curtain will go up on the Royal Ballet's *Sleeping Beauty*. Then, after a Saturday spent at the January sales, sightseeing or taking advantage of special half-price admission to the Theatre Museum and the Museum of the Moving Image, it's off to west London for the last London performance of *Riverdance*. Then back to the Mountbatten for supper and cabaret. After breakfast on Sunday there's a fascinating guided tour of Theatreland, and the weekend ends with tea and scones back at the hotel. The fully inclusive cost is £199 per person. To book, ring Centre Stage on 0800 335588.

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A WEEK IN SILVER

A daily guide to the new Silver Galleries at the Victoria and Albert Museum

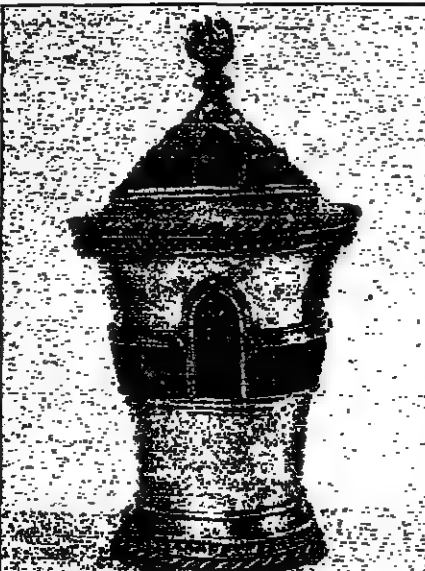
The Merode Cup

MADE in France, probably between 1400 and 1420, this magnificent piece was presumably intended solely for display, and would have been extremely costly. It owes its name to the Merode family of Belgium, which sold it in 1828. However, it may have been made for Jean, Duc de Berry — a great medieval patron of the arts whose court rivalled that of the King. An inventory shows that in 1417 he had such a cup in his collection.

Made of silver-gilt, the cup has translucent plique à jour enamel

plaques, the sole surviving medieval example of this technique. *Plique à jour* was the most difficult enamel technique because it involved firing the glass into cells and removing the backing to create an effect like a stained-glass window. The delicately rendered flowers and birds are achieved by a technique known as pouncing, using very fine punches.

● The Silver Galleries, Victoria and Albert Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 0RT (0171-938 8441)



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FILM 1
Fear and loathing in the Sixties is superbly caught in *I Shot Andy Warhol*



FILM 2
Plenty of saucy thrills and spills for Geena Davis in *The Long Kiss Goodnight*



FILM 3
The Van, Roddy Doyle's sardonic view of Dublin life, transfers disappointingly to the screen



FILM 4
... while Le Bonheur is a French comedy chiefly notable for an appearance by Eric Cantona

Walkers on the wild side

CINEMA: Geoff Brown is blown away by the brilliance of Lili Taylor in *I Shot Andy Warhol*

Every other film poster in town seems to feature people grinning in tight clothing and brandishing a gun. This week the people are women. In the brilliant and surprising *I Shot Andy Warhol*, Lili Taylor's fingers are on the trigger as Valerie Solanas, the woman who fired bullets into the laid-back guru of modern art at his Factory headquarters in 1968. Solanas, played by Taylor with mesmerising skill, is presented as a hyperactive woman boiling with rage. She scowls and smokes non-stop. Her words tumble out at breakneck speed as she harangues passers-by, or badgers Warhol about producing her feminist play *Up Your Ass*. Harron's film never scorns the humour in the situations, but it remains locked into the heroine's aggression, crystallised by the manifesto Solanas generated to promote *Scum*, her one-woman Society for Cutting Up Men.

Where did this extraordinary person come from, and how did she brush against the Warhol entourage? Harron, a Canadian-born director of British television arts documentaries, proposes some fascinating answers, weaving in and out of Solanas's disturbed childhood, her friendship with the transvestite Candy Darling, her contact with the publisher Maurice Girodias, and her frowning presence on the Factory's fringes.

Taylor's performance, gripping enough, acquires extra force when placed next to Jared Harris's Warhol, uncannily close to the original in appearance and vocal tones.

Words erupt from Solanas like ammunition from a machine-gun; sometimes the most this drugged-out Warhol can say is "Oh, er". Rage versus vacuity: the conflict generates incredible tension, and much incidental comedy.

The suspicion persists that the genuine Warhol was always more knowing than Harris's bemused empty vessel. But Harron still provides a convincing portrait of an era and a mindset; and the supporting cast, from Lothaire Bluteau's sleazy Girodias to the decorative beauties at Warhol's Factory, slots into place with wit and precision. It is Taylor's film, though: she makes her impassioned, deluded Solanas a near-tragic figure, crushed by the force of her own beliefs.

The *Long Kiss Goodnight* serves up its own kind of spectacle. Bodies explode and cascade. There are spectacular thrills with knives, guns, cars and Niagara Falls. And Geena Davis, dressed in nothing but a white slip, she is tormented on a waterwheel, like an old-time serial heroine. Later, she gets locked in a freezer, wearing equally spartan clothing. The director, I suppose, is allowed to ogle: he's her husband, Renny Harlin, last seen falling flat on his face in *Cutthroat Island*. But you get my point: *The Long Kiss Goodnight* takes place on the far side of the preposterous.

The film's cheeky excess goes some way to soften the slick, casual violence and the lack of imagination. And Samuel L. Jackson warms the temperament with his characterisation of Mitch, the small-time detective hired to dig into Davis's mysterious past. Could this cheerful loser with sloppy clothes and a tart tongue actually be a human being? Certainly he comes as

close as anyone in Shane Black's computerised script, which created a storm two years when it was sold for a princely \$4 million. But you are still left with a particularly chilling entertainment: vivid enough in its physical detail to pull in the crowds, heartless enough to send them back on to the streets with their feelings stunted.

The *Van* is an ordeal, too. For one thing, there is the decibel factor. No matter how mordant and funny the dialogue may be — and this dialogue is by Roddy Doyle — two actors yelling at each other in scene after scene is wearing. Colm Meaney, an essential part of any film adapted from one of Doyle's Barrytown novels, keeps on shouting "Jesus!". Donal O'Kelly, as the chum who staves off the unemployment blues by buying a dilapidated fast-food van, maintains his own barrage of curping remarks and Dublin working-class slang. Under the bedlam you can just hear the sound of



Jared Harris — "uncannily close to the original in appearance and vocal tones" as the target of Valerie Solanas's rage in *I Shot Andy Warhol*

I Shot Andy Warhol
Virgin Haymarket
18, 106 mins
Vivid performances in a powerful portrait of an era

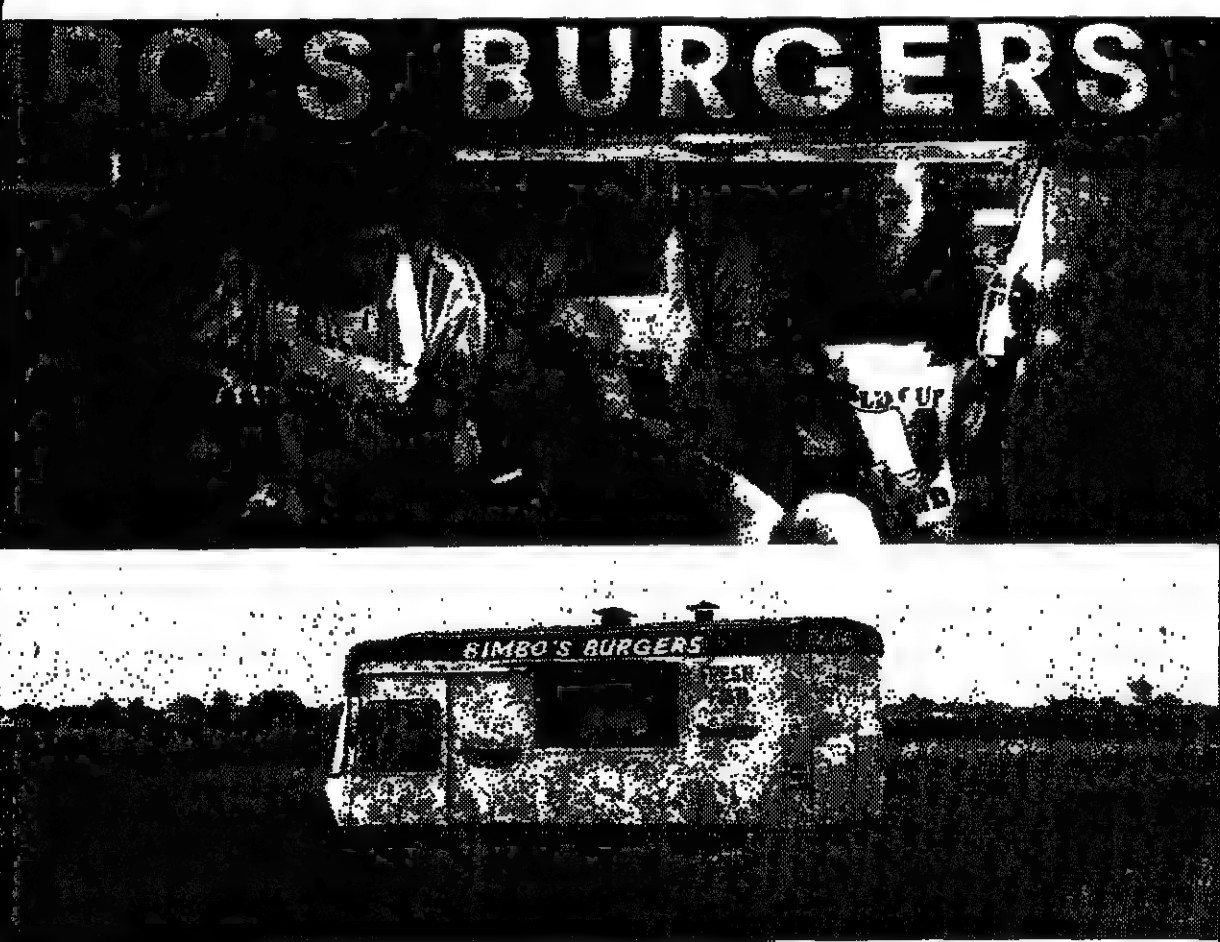
The Van
Odeon Leicester Square
15, 100 mins
Roddy Doyle's novel falls flat on the screen

Le Bonheur
Curzon Mayfair
15, 106 mins
French comedy trifle

Beautiful Girls
Warner West End
15, 113 mins
Wearsome males

Dracula: Dead and Loving It
Warner West End
PG, 90 mins
Unfunny Mel Brooks

The New Film by Stephen Frears



THE VAN

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Jonathan Clark on the bloody price of freedom

The tree of liberty refreshed

At the end of America's century, dominated by Woodrow Wilson's crusade to export American values around the world, historians necessarily still ask: what, after all, was the essence of the American Revolution? How far was it just a defence of the rule of law, democracy and ancient liberties, a simple transfer of sovereignty? Or how much was it an act of radical self-emancipation, a secular millennium in which everything was remade and humanity's calendar reset at Year One?

If the second, the Revolution was not for the United States alone: it was a call to world revolution, to extend in time, space and social agenda the implications of an initial act of liberation. If so, 1776 becomes the first of that sequence of emancipations of which 1789 was the second, and which created the world we know.

Thomas Jefferson therefore stands at the nub of the problem: Founding Father, American Minister Plenipotentiary in Paris from 1785 to 1789, Secretary of State from 1790 to 1793, diplomat and philosopher. What links did this astonishing man forge between these two events?

Where John Adams denied any strong debt of 1789 to 1776, justifying 1776 in very English terms, Jefferson championed the interpretation that France's Revolution was the culmination and fulfilment of America's. Jefferson took an extreme view of the ancient régime: the people were "ground to powder by the vices of the form of government", namely "an absolute despotism". His prophetic words from Paris in 1787, though specifically about Shay's rebellion in Massachusetts, were universally valid: "The spirit of resistance to government is so valuable on certain occasions, that I wish it always to be kept alive. It will often be exercised when wrong, but better so than not to be exercised at all. I like a little rebellion now and then. It is like a storm in the atmosphere."

On another occasion, he was also writing of America in declaring: "What signify a few lives lost in a century or two? The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure." In this eloquent, almost Burkean book, O'Brien argues that these words allegedly adorning the T-shirt of one of the suspects of the Oklahoma bombing at his arrest, summed up Jefferson's attitude to the French Revolution also.

When the National Assembly began to sweep away the old order, he admired its uncompromising determination to tear down

and rebuild. Safely back in Philadelphia, he refrained from condemning the September massacres, when several thousand helpless prisoners were dragged from their cells and butchered; applauded the Jacobins for their execution of the king; and condoned the loss of innocent life with the argument that ends justify means: "Was ever such a prize won with so little innocent blood?"

On this principle, which O'Brien calls "an apology for genocide", Jefferson discreetly ignored the massacre of many thousands more in the Terror. For public consumption, he denied that the atrocities were taking place at all. In private, he accepted their reality but justified them as undertaken in the cause of liberty. Only after 1794, when the French National Convention decreed the abolition of slavery, did this racist slave-owner's attitude towards the Revolution begin to cool.

In O'Brien's version, Jefferson's notion was liberty, not the United States; his ritual observance was rebellion, not democracy; his targets were not cruelty, injustice or expropriation, but "tyranny" and "oppression". Jefferson's idea of liberty was not Burke's; it was, writes O'Brien, the "fanatical cult" of a "wild liberty, absolute, untrammelled, universal, the liberty of a great revolutionary manifesto: the Declaration of Independence".

Today, America's civil religion takes what it wants from Jefferson, and conceals the rest. True, he declared slavery doomed; but he prophesied also that negroes after emancipation, could not live in the same polity as whites, and demanded their return to Africa. If emancipated blacks remained in Virginia, they would be "brought under restraint", argues O'Brien: "The Ku-Klux-Klan was ideologically descended from Thomas Jefferson". He must be deleted from the American Civil Religion (Official Version), demands O'Brien, to fit it for the United States of the future, dominated by blacks, Hispanics, Asians and women.

His only fear is that Jefferson, taken out of the pantheon of white liberals, will be appropriated by white supremacists instead. Yet if Jefferson the racist anarchist is an immediate concern for the honest citizens of Oklahoma City, the rest of the world might be more affected by the larger part of the problem that O'Brien overlooks: just how harmless is Jefferson the revolutionary liberal in the official version of his creed, peacefully embodied in American egalitarianism and idealistically expressed in the policies of William Jefferson Clinton?

THE LONG AFFAIR
Thomas Jefferson and
the French Revolution
By Conor Cruise O'Brien

Sinclair-Stevenson, £25
ISBN 1 8519 637 2



Jefferson: uncompromising



Thesiger with his essential gun: near the end of his journey, by the Gulf of Tadjoura on the coast of the present-day Republic of Djibouti

Escape from civilisation

Robyn Davidson on the nascent talent in the early writings of a great desert traveller

Wilfred Thesiger was born in 1910, the son of the British representative in Abyssinia (now Ethiopia). The bills of his first nine years ended when he was sent to a public school in England. There he suffered the alienation of a child whose inner landscape had been formed by Empire's outposts.

A decade later, Haile Selassie invited the young man back, to attend his coronation as Emperor of Ethiopia. That month's holiday would "permanently affect" the course of Thesiger's life. "I had felt then the lure of the unknown, the urge to go where no white man had been..."

This is the voice of the youth who would become the author of two seminal works of 20th-century travel literature, *Arabian Sands* and *The Marsh Arabs*: one of the last of a species — the British male explorer with an essentially Victorian, pre-Freudian, exclusively masculine mentality.

The *Danakil Diary* records this first return to Ethiopia, and a second, when he explored the Awash River to its end, through the lands of Danakil tribesmen.

Diary is an awkward form — raw material clogged with trivia and repetition. There are interminable entries of how many oxen, waterbuck or lesser kudu, gerenuk, and soul the

author wasted that day. And then there's interest-defeating journal-speak like "Wally says that Holland shot a bongo in the forests close to Maji", which leaves us no wiser as to who Wally or Holland are, what a bongo is, or where Maji might be.

However, there are compensations for this sometimes cluttered, sometimes gaping form. The reader's own imagination is forced to work in odd ways. A day's events, all crammed into one line — "A considerable amount more road making, and tree cutting. Heard another honey bird. The natives say he will sometimes lead you to a lion instead of to honey" — unexplained anecdotes — "A Frenchman was murdered not far from here three years ago. The remains of his corpse, one leg, was taken to Addis Ababa and formally decorated by the Emperor" — give the book a wonderfully surreal quality at times. Also, the very tedium and confusion of the form reflect what such journeys are really like — a matrix of boredom containing moments of beauty, excitement, dread.

And frustration. When he is within a week's march of the end of the river he is ordered back by the Abyssinian Governor. He allows himself one small moan here — "Lifless and depressed... I cannot describe my bitterness at this idiotic interference."

THE DANAKIL
DIARY
Journey Through
Abyssinia, 1930-34
By Wilfred Thesiger
HarperCollins, £18
ISBN 0 00 255710 X

"kills" of other men. Naturally, proof of these kills is required, so the hunter castrates his victims, sometimes while they are still alive. Thesiger describes a young tribesman coming into camp after scoring his first "trophy". "He struck me as the Danakil equivalent of a nice, rather self-conscious Etonian who had just won his school colours for cricket." But while the Danakil take the heads of human beings as trophies, Thesiger takes the heads of everything else. Why? What did he do with them all? How were they preserved during the journey? A macabre image comes to mind — a train of men, camels and mules moving through a heat mirage loaded up with the stinking and stinking heads of every imaginable beast.

To undertake the last leg of the journey, he requires a Sultan's permission. He describes their meeting — hundreds of men, the Sultan with a silver-topped stick, slaves carrying rifles in red silk covers. "As I looked round the clearing at the ranks of squatting warriors... I knew that this moonlight meeting in unknown Africa with a savage

portage who hated Europeans was the realization of my boyhood dream. I had come here in search of adventure: the mapping, the collecting of animals and birds were all incidental. The knowledge that somewhere in this neighbourhood three previous expeditions had been exterminated, that we were far beyond any hope of assistance, that even our whereabouts were unknown, I found wholly satisfying."

The stupor when the expedition is over, when he has to sleep "imprisoned in a house" is inevitable. The pain of readjustment to the smallness of England would be a constant throughout his life. The last line of *Arabian Sands*, when he leaves his Arab friends to fly "home", reads: "I know how it felt to go into exile."

Thesiger is, I imagine, an unashamed nostalgist for a lost era. I heard a story about him once. A young journalist, in an interview, accused him of promoting a stereotype of the noble savage. Thesiger gave him a withering look and said: "But they are noble, damn you." Apocryphal or not, it fits.

Robyn Davidson's *Desert Places* is published by Viking, priced £18.

Contemporary concerns

In the 1955 general election, Anthony Eden addressed a mass rally in the Birmingham Rag Market. I was there. He was the master of the occasion, exuding calmness and authority. Within four months of his election victory his reputation had spiralled downwards. Fleet Street rebuked him for vacillation and indecision.

Indeed, it was the misfortune of Eden to have a fluctuating reputation with the culminating disaster of Suez. Such a career has invited considerable biographical attention, some ten books having been written on the subject. David Dutton now adds his volume which attempts to redress the generally hostile judgment of Eden with

a view that goes wider than Suez. It is persuasive, not least because he often qualifies rather than rejects his opponents' arguments.

Dutton has set himself a formidable task. For many the alleged infamy of Suez obliterated the need for any wider consideration. Eden himself felt that his memoirs should start, not with childhood, but with a defence of Suez. Of course, Dutton could not judge Eden's life and reputation without an assessment of the cumulative misfortunes that entombed his reputation in 1956. He suffered growing ill-health, he was prone to severe personal judgments ranging from Mussolini to Nasser, he had a blind spot when judging the nature and intensity of

American opinion, and he was arguably insecure from having to wait so many years before acceding to the premiership. The conflict with Nasser required the calm perception of the Americans or else the worldly cynicism of the French. Eden was able to provide neither, and was eventually trapped in a collision with France and Israel. It is a sad irony since so much of his

Secondly, Eden secured and deserved wide respect as a principled Foreign Secretary in the 1930s. His commitment to the League of Nations and collective security gave him an appeal beyond Tory ranks. Dutton concludes that Eden was far-sighted in seeking better relations with the Soviet Union. This was an essential but, after Yalta, a forlorn task. Patient diplomacy could do little to protect British interests

against Soviet brute force. Acknowledging this, Dutton also concludes: "Overall his performance as Foreign Secretary between 1940 and 1945 probably marked the peak of his career."

Topically, the book also makes a judgment on Eden's European policy. He shared the general attitude of great circumspection when there were moves towards European union after the collapse

Behold once again the man

THIS BRILLIANT book should be a great relief for anyone condemned to read the run of contemporary Nietzsche commentaries: and for anyone who isn't, it could be an introduction which it is hard to imagine being surpassed in passion and lucidity. Lesley Chamberlain's opening sentence is "This book is an attempt to befriend Nietzsche", and that is a precise description.

It takes him through 1888, the last year of his sane and then half-sane life, and combines moving biographical narrative, evocation of places and moods, and an account of the writings of that year which is a tour de force of accuracy of feeling. More than anyone I have read, Chamberlain manages to do justice to Nietzsche's complex relationship to Wagner, the man and his music, and to show why it matters so much that we understand it.

She moves on to his travels to and from St. Maria, his refuge in the Swiss Engadine, and his further works of the



Wagner (left) and Nietzsche: Chamberlain delineates their complex relationship



Michael Tanner

NIETZSCHE
IN TURIN
The End of the Future
By Lesley Chamberlain
Quartet, £10
ISBN 0 7043 8028 5

absurd that I almost gave up. Yet a main virtue of the book is its resolute refusal to romanticise or demonise. She can see just how Nietzsche's works are pitched, and judge the level of engagement they need, and the personal response they insist on.

She deserved better from her publishers. This book is a tissue of misprints, among the best of which is "Kritische" for "Kritische", a mistake Nietzsche would, I hope, have relished; "gold soldiers" for "good soldiers" is fun, too. But I am afraid that Chamberlain herself may be responsible for

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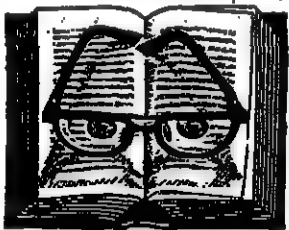
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Boz strikes again

IT IS HARD to grasp how pervasive Dickens was in Victorian times. As well as the 14 major novels, usually issued as serials for wider circulation, he wrote travel books, Christmas stories, even an opera. He spoke at dinners, edited papers and campaigned for various reforms — although his sympathies could be contradictory, as John Carey showed in his study *The Violent Effigy*.

Dickens once remarked "I have often thought that I should certainly have been as successful on the boards as I have been between them" (no false modesty there), and from 1853 onwards he gave some 470 readings, in Britain, America and France. His reading copy of *A Christmas Carol*, published in a smart facsimile by the New York Public Library in 1971, is not just abridged, but annotated with tonal prompts such as "Father" and "Mystery". Dickens even allowed "reading" editions to be published, although he often improvised new passages. "I got things out of the old *Carol* — effects: I mean — so entirely new and so very strong, that I quite amazed myself and wondered where I was going next," he wrote from Paris, just as Bob Dylan might have done from Budokan. And the mere mention of some characters could bring applause, like the first appearance of a harmonica.

Recently, Dent published the second of four volumes of



BIBLIOMANE

Dickens's prodigious feats of journalism, to set beside the continuing Pilgrim edition of his correspondence, which Oxford has been engaged in for more than three decades. *The Amusements of the People* (edited by Michael Slater, £25) covers 1834-51, but its 400 pages hold little more than a quarter of the pieces from those years. What stands out today is the range of subjects Dickens was expected and able to cover, from reviewing melodramas — to pamphlets, wars and election coverage. He also wrote satirical pieces about such matters as the scourge of bill sticking and a John Majorish initiative to teach the world to sing.

Not all of the writing now reads well, and the context provided by Slater is sometimes essential. How strange, though, that in an edition called *Dickens's Journalism*, the text should always use the possessive form Dickens's.

HAVING thought of Dickens's effects as rather broad, I was surprised by the precision of his description in *Pickwick Papers* of the street where I live, when I typeset it for a housewarming party: "There is a row of about 100 houses in the Borough, which shed a gentle melancholy upon the soul... In this happy retreat are colonised a few clear-starchers, a sprinkling of journeymen bookbinders, one or two prison agents for the Insolvent Court, several small housekeepers who are employed in the Docks, a handful of mantua-makers, and a seasoning of jobbing tailors... The population is migratory, usually disappearing on the verge of quarter-day, and generally by night. His Majesty's revenues are seldom collected in this happy valley, the rents are dubious, and the water communication is very frequently cut off." His collective noun for bookbinders is exactly right: a *sprinkling*, because of "sprinkled calf", the kind of binder's leather that is flecked with ink.

IN HIS own lifetime, the *Quarterly Review* predicted that Dickens's "ephemeral popularity [would] be followed by early oblivion". Catalogue CXIII from the antiquarian booksellers, Jarndyce lists 1,766 items by or relating to the Inimitable Boz, and shows just how wrong the ephemeral *Quarterly* could be (Jarndyce, 46 Great Russell Street, WC1, 0171 6314220).

JIM MCCUE

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Richard Johnson and Imogen Stubbs in *Uncle Vanya*

Even lovers must visit the dentist

Imogen Stubbs eavesdrops on a passion of the mind

Dear Writer, Dear Actress is a collection of letters between the actress Olga Knipper and the writer Anton Chekhov, during her various roles as his friend, lover, wife, widow. They were written while she was playing (among other parts) Yelena in Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*.

Nobody could have leapt on this book and devoured it more eagerly than I did — also playing Yelena, in Bill Bryden's recent production of *Uncle Vanya*. My pitiful cries of "but what does Chekhov mean?" during rehearsals had, of course, been met with the reply: "We can't dig him up and ask him."

Right from the outset Knipper is writing in despair. "Everybody at home is appalled by my performance..." Naturally I hurried through all her comments about toothache and autumn leaves to reach his answer — only to discover that he also fills his letters with tonal problems and the state of his garden shed.

Only by the end of the book does it become clear that this elusiveness is a necessary part of their relationship, both professionally and emotionally — a means of self-discovery for her and self-preservation for him.

It is always compelling reading private letters — but also unsettling. They were not intended for publication and so they are not offering themselves up for judgement or mockery. They are just letters — whimsical, boring, anguished, funny, exasperated — an insight into the domestic life of a genius, not into the genius itself. "I went to the dentist today," writes Chekhov, unaware that his wife is suffering a miscarriage hundreds of miles away, "and, d'you know, he wasn't in!" When I had finished the letters I felt I should somehow lock them back in a drawer and tip-toe away.

DEAR WRITER, DEAR ACTRESS

Edited and translated by
Jean Benedetti
Methuen, £16.95
ISBN 0-413-70580-3

Indeed, there are areas of Chekhov's life I could happily have lived without contemplating — as when his letters increasingly concentrate on the state of his bowels. Also (and I'm sure the translation is somehow misleading here), to read that Chekhov's pet names for Olga were "doggie" and "horsiekins" is a bit like discovering that the man you love wears Mr Bobby underwear.

But by the end of the book I felt hugely attached to both Olga and Chekhov, and very grateful when I realised, with only a few pages left,

that Chekhov was about to die. This is recorded in Olga's memoir and is wonderfully moving. The most devastating correspondence is from then on, as Olga feels compelled to go on writing to Chekhov after his death: because they have lived so much apart, you keep expecting a dry Chekhovian telegram — "Just popped out — back in a hundred years." And Olga suddenly seems to find her voice — able to confront the problems that in many ways ruined their marriage and which have been so clear to the reader all along.

It is not called *Dear Anton, Dear Olga*, but the poignant *Dear Writer, Dear Actress* because their love was utterly fostered and controlled by their professions — which kept them constantly part of each others' creative lives, but almost constantly apart. More-

over, it meant that their love was to some extent part of a heightened reality — consequently, when they were together their life and love seemed inexplicably mundane.

The theatre, the theatre... I don't know whether to love it or wish it to hell... I acted against my own conscience. Still, who knows... if I had given up the theatre... There is a moment in *The Three Sisters* between Vershinin and Masha, who have fallen in love with each other. She is on stage with her sisters, and suddenly she hears him hum a simple tune for her. "Ti tum, ti tum, ti tum" and she replies "ti tum, ti tum" and gets up and goes to him. It is very simple, very private — it is their way of declaring their love for each other. I found these letters were rather like that — and like the sisters I was part of the experience, but of course, by definition excluded from it.

Making Burke into a spectacle

Kenneth Baker

EDMUND BURKE
A Life in Caricature
By Nicholas K. Robinson
Yale, £30
ISBN 0-300-06801-8

Political philosophers are rarely caricatured in their lifetime, but that was not the case with Edmund Burke, who appears in 293 prints — ranking him fifth in the order of popularity in this golden age of graphic satire. The reason for this is that Burke was also an active politician who moved from the Left to the conservative Right.

Burke was given a "rotten borough" as a reward for being the Private Secretary to Rockingham, who briefly became Prime Minister in 1765. As he was the cleverest political thinker of his generation, Burke could not remain silent and entered controversy with great bursts of eloquence — his weary opponents dubbed him the "dinner bell" of the House of Commons. For the first 25 years of his political life he was the friend of Fox and Sheridan, happy to be in the Opposition and denouncing the Government. He spoke up for the American colonies — "Do not burden them with taxes" — he tried to reduce the King's patronage by cutting the Civil List; he led the crusade against Warren Hastings and, in the Regency Crisis of 1788 he incautiously supported the Prince of Wales.

Leading satirists, Gillray, Sayers and Boyne depicted him as an Irish adventurer, too clever by half, a Quixote tilting at windmills, and quite

falsely as a Papist wearing a biretta. Barely any of the cartoons is remotely favourable.

All cartoonists like a tab of recognition for their targets — Churchill's cigar, Margaret Thatcher's handbag — and for Burke it was his spectacles perched upon his long nose. Great fun is made with them and he is usually depicted as an emaciated, demented loon peering myopically.

In 1790, appalled by the French Revolution, Burke wrote his great prescient work, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, the founding text of Conservatism. He abandoned his old friends and teamed up with Pitt and George III. The same satirists, then aided and abetted by the young radical Dent, did not praise him for this conversion, but turned upon him for his apostasy. Poor Burke, he just couldn't win.

This cartoon biography is an excellent way of understanding the life and times of this strange and important political figure. Nicholas Robinson wears his considerable



The Infamous Coalition (by James Gillray) between the radical Fox and the high Tory North, in 1783-84, was the most caricatured event of the 18th century; here they are joined by Burke, unfairly depicted as a Catholic, but the biretta and the spectacles became his distinguishing marks

scholarship lightly: his judgments are shrewd and generous and he brings vividly to life that rumbustious age.

Yale University Press has again produced a superb volume to illuminate the politics of the 18th century. I hope that Nicholas Robinson, whose wife is the President of the Irish Republic, will find time to write another such biography, perhaps this time of Charles James Fox, the most caricatured figure of the 18th century and the first Leader of His Majesty's Opposition.

The Rt Hon Kenneth Baker, C1, MP, is the editor of *The Faber Book of War Poetry*, priced £17.50.

Beware literary lions

Looked at through Amanda Craig's eyes in *A Vicious Circle*, the literary world doesn't look like a pretty place. It is filled with vain, untalented authors, superficial publishers, empty-headed publicists, power-hungry literary editors and a group of venomous reviewers who never bother to read more than a few pages of any book they're assigned. It is such a sad place, one leaves the novel wondering why an honest soul would ever stray near it — even if this is only supposed to be a satire.

The novel focuses on a particular group of literary and journalistic sharks: there is a callous books editor called Ivo Sponge (you get the picture), his equally horrid employer Max de Monde ("de" is always good for a rich villain), his nasty daughter Amelia and her husband, a political journalist by the name of Mark Crawley. The few characters with any trace of virtue, or even a regular name, are either very poor, very oppressed, or about to die.

Still, Craig is not writing a tragedy, and she aims to take the reader through the horrors of contemporary literary London while keeping her sense of humour. She has a taste for rather knowing, cynical jokes that narrowly succeed in forcing the reader to pull a smile, but are rarely sharp enough to hold it there for very long. We hear, for instance, that Candida, an editor at a fictional publishing house called Belgravia, is someone "for whom lunch was not a noun but a verb".



Craig makes the book world seem a dangerous place

Alain de Botton

A VICIOUS CIRCLE
By Amanda Craig
Fourth Estate, £15.99
ISBN 1-85702-681-0

Another character remarks: "I sometimes think that every Oxbridge graduate has two degrees... one in their subject, and one in bitching"; a run-down housing development is described as "not so much a sink as a toilet".

The novel reads like an initiation guide to the literary world for the innocent or idealistic (Balzac's *Lost Illusions* is an influence). We are shown around the capital's favourite media hangout, the Slouch Club in Soho, where we find authors on the razze, agents on the dazze, politicians on the frazzle. There are epigrams to enlighten: "You

can only rise or fall in London. There's no middle way". "In journalism, venom is the elixir of success" and, apparently, "There are few things worse for a journalist than to work on a sinking paper". Midway, one character gives another a lesson in the art of reviewing novels: "You have to grab [the reader] by the balls and hang on." Is one recommendation another is that you should never give a book a bad review if its author is in any danger of one day reviewing yours.

If *A Vicious Circle* disappoints, it is because the literary world is indeed filled with abuses, and the anger one detects beneath Craig's prose is more than justified. There are, regrettably, many horrible publishers, literary editors and authors: but there is very little chance of hitting the target with satirical instruments as blunt as Ivo Sponge and Max de Monde.

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How the no-show squeeze leads to the 'bumps'

SOMEONE has got to take the blame for the no-show squeeze and the resulting 'bumps' in the airline industry. It is usually businessmen — who book seats which they have no intention of using and then cannot be bothered to cancel.

International scheduled airlines acknowledge the need for a system of "no show" penalties, but have shied away from introducing them because of the fear of competition and because it would be "too difficult" to police.

Instead they prefer to pay compensation to those who agree not to travel on a particular flight and hand out even more to those who are compulsorily off-loaded.

But many routes are now so full, because of soaring demand, that the problem has reached crisis point.

Take the case of Professor Sir Frederick Holliday, chairman of Northumbrian Water, who was furious when he and his wife were "bumped" from a British Airways flight to Sydney despite booking Club Class tickets weeks in advance and checking in three hours before departure.

"After a fuss I secured our seats, but others were less lucky," he said. "I understand



The Travel Business
by HARVEY ELLIOTT

the potential losses from 'no shows' but such people should be penalised, not those who book, confirm and show in good time."

How right he is. British Airways has managed to reduce the number of "no shows" from seven in 10,000 passengers to five in 10,000. But this does not include the passengers who volunteer to stand down and catch the next available flight.

Airlines are forced to overbook seats to balance the number of people who scatter phantoms bookings across several flights and, because they have paid full business class fare, can choose which to take. It would be courteous to let someone know which they had decided on. But the arrogance of some business travellers who abuse the airline and fellow passengers knows no bounds.

It is already impossible to get a seat — of any kind — on a Qantas flight to Australia before Christmas Eve, and flights to Singapore, Hong Kong, New York, Buenos Aires, Johannesburg and Tokyo are crammed to capacity. Business class is booming, yet the number of seats is coming down as demand goes up because airlines are offering passengers more leg room — and that means fewer seats.

Business travel agents, such as the Travel Company and Hogg Robinson, do their best to monitor airline computers to ensure that as seats are returned to the system, they can grab them for their clients. But there is little they can do if the airline is not told about a cancellation.

It is outrageous that passengers booking and checking in in good time are denied boarding, or given a seat at the last moment after waiting anxiously. Airlines have pleaded with passengers to show consideration — long enough. Now is the time to stop lording it to them and get tough by introducing pocket-hurting, no-show penalties.

Early snowstorms boost ski resorts

By HARVEY ELLIOTT AND NOEL FUNG

SKI resorts from Norway to the Pyrenees are opening early to take advantage of heavy snowfalls across Europe.

Conditions for skiing are reported to be perfect with many alpine resorts already recording more snow on the runs than at any time during last winter.

David Hearn of the Ski Club of Great Britain said: "The snow this year is quite fantastic. I am not one to get too excited about the prospects for a coming season, but this is an exception."

The snow is now lying up to six feet deep in the main alpine resorts, such as Tignes, and with few people skiing yet, the slopes have been groomed to perfection. It is the snowiest November I can remember and there is now enough snow to guarantee the quality of the skiing throughout the season.

Dozens of resorts now plan to open on Saturday, three weeks earlier than normal and some, especially in the French Pyrenees, have already opened, with snow up to three feet deep on the upper slopes.

In Norway, ski resorts are

opening daily with Geilo, for example, now operating five lifts and five runs and a 16 mile prepared cross-country track.

In Andorra there is three feet of snow at 6,000 feet and the forecast is continuing cold with temperatures hovering around -20C.

In Leysin, Switzerland, snow starts to accumulate to eight inches at 600 feet reaching one metre at 1,100 to 1,300 feet.

Snow is lying up to six feet deep at 3,000 feet. St Anton, in the Tyrol, has three feet of snow while Obergurgl, another Tyrolean resort, records five feet.

The improving exchange rate with the franc — now up to Fr8.3 to the pound — is also attracting record numbers of British skiers and bookings throughout Europe are at least 15 per cent above last year's levels.

Gloria Ward of Thomson said: "It is the best early snow in 20 years and the Alps have got off to a better start even than North America. Koen skiers wanting to travel before

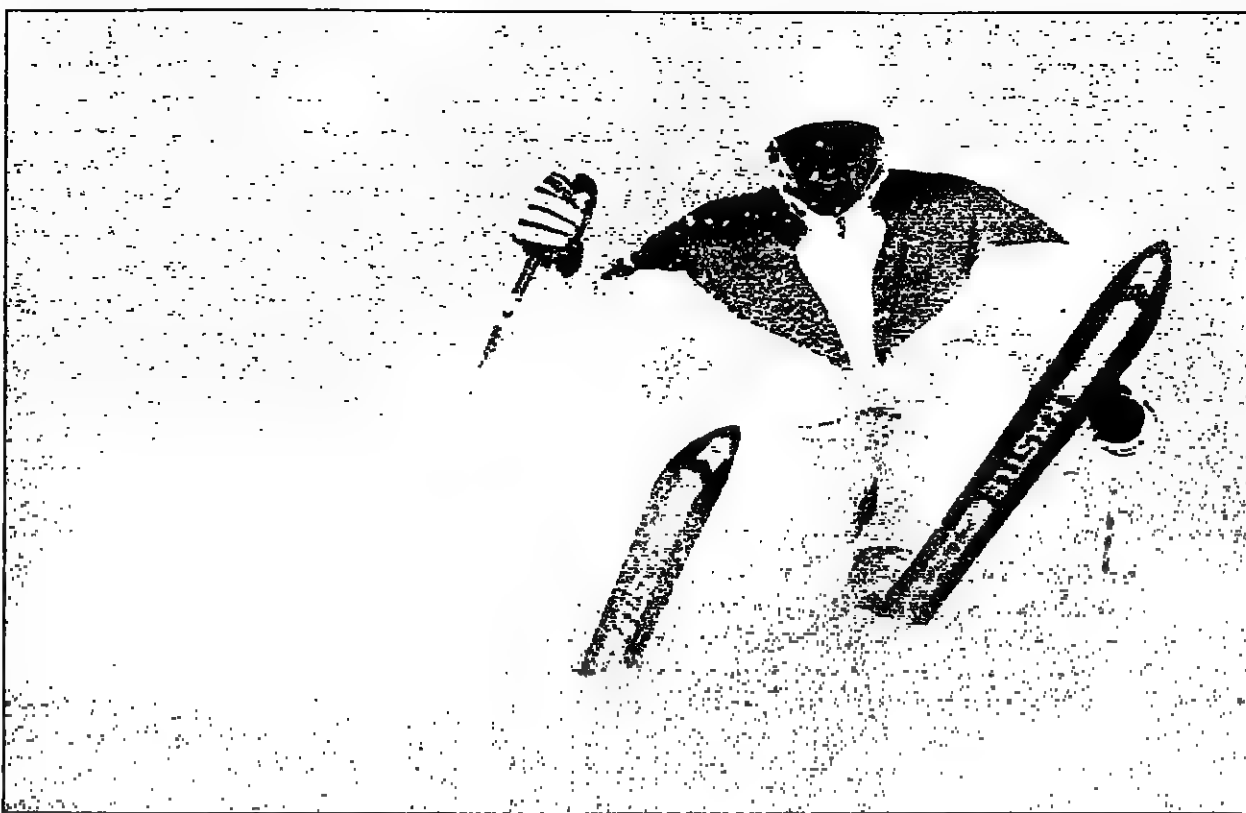
Christmas look like getting great conditions, uncrowded pistes and some excellent prices."

Lizzie Norton, director of Ski Solutions, said that sales were buoyant: "Countries showing a comeback on sales are Italy and Switzerland. The Swiss franc has become more favourable this year than last."

Andy Perrin, of Crystal, said that the growth in bookings throughout the industry was around 17 per cent. "Even the inexpensive countries such as Bulgaria and Andorra are doing well."

Nina Clifford, product manager of Nielson, said: "By the end of the season, we should be seeing about 5 to 8 per cent growth in numbers of customers."

Conditions are set to get better still. A Met Office forecaster said: "Over the past ten years, we have had mild autumns and winters in Britain and Europe, so such early snowfall has been uncommon. Temperatures will drop further early next week so there will be more snow."



Unusually heavy snowfalls mean perfect skiing conditions are already being reported at many European resorts

Overbooking threat to £10,000 holiday

By HARVEY ELLIOTT

A FAMILY of four who paid almost £10,000 for a Christmas holiday in Barbados were told this week that the hotel could no longer offer them their chosen room.

Carolina Moran, from Weybridge, Surrey, booked a Kuoni holiday in the luxurious Almond Beach on the west coast of Barbados through her local Going Places travel agency on August 15.

"We specifically asked for a junior suite with two separate rooms so that my husband Mark and I could be in one while our two young children, Mariella and Edward, shared the other," said Mrs Moran.

"As one of the children is only one year old, we were only charged for three people, but it still cost £9,649, which we paid in full on September 24."

The family is booked to fly out to Barbados on British Airways from Gatwick on December 17 and return on January 1. But on Tuesday

they were contacted by Going Places who told them that the room was no longer available. "It seemed it was simply overbooked," said Mrs Moran. "We felt annoyed and very let down but the agency told us there was nothing they could do. Kuoni then offered us another room, but not a suite, or our money back."

Going Places admitted that it was "our worst nightmare" but said that Kuoni had to resolve the problem.

A Kuoni official said that they were still hopeful of being able to put the Morans into the junior suite they had originally booked but in the meantime were offering both compensation and an alternative.

"There is no way we would ever double-book a customer," said a spokeswoman. "But unfortunately the hotel suddenly informed us that the room was not available, without giving a reason. We thought we should at least offer an alternative and al-

though it has a different layout the new room does have two additional beds and it overlooks the ocean."

Kuoni also offered to pay £426 compensation plus £30 per person as "spending money" in the resort.

The Association of British Travel Agents said that the problem was one which "keeps tour operators and travel agents awake at night."

"Unfortunately the travel industry is at risk of being held to ransom by hoteliers who sometimes play Russian roulette with bookings," said Keith Betton, of Abta. "The only way to prevent it is to penalise hoteliers who do this to customers and if necessary do not use the hotel again."

Kuoni said last night that they were still in negotiation with the hotel and the Morans were waiting to see what the outcome would be before deciding whether to continue with their planned Christmas holiday of a lifetime.

Hotels lose out to home comforts

By DAVID CHURCHILL

EXECUTIVE travellers are rejecting impersonal business hotels in favour of the home comforts offered by rented service apartments, which include fitted kitchens and washing machines.

This switch away from traditional hotels has prompted several leading chains in the United States, including Marriott and Choice Hotels, to build apartment-only properties under the names TownPlace Suites (Marriott) and MainStay Suites (Choice).

But the trend has also spread to Europe and the Middle East, according to the hotel consultants Pannell Kerr Forster. In a new study on the Middle East, they report a "significant threat" to hotels in the region from Western business travellers who prefer apartments.

In London, several leading hotels are installing apartments to counter this threat. The Tower Thistle Hotel has created a floor of 29 rooms to create 12 apartments, each with its own kitchen. Early next month it plans to turn its staff accommodation hotel into 12 apartments.

Kurt Kuen, the Tower's general manager, says the move "reflects the demand for more space and amenities when business people stay for more than a few days".

Prices start at £320 a night for a one-bedroom apartment. The newly opened Regents Plaza Hotel in north London offers 50 apartments with kitchen, dining area and separate entrance from the hotel.

Specialist reservation companies which provide apartments also report increased demand. "Many regular travellers are a little fed up with staying in the same type of hotels," says Sandra McInerney, marketing manager for the Apartment Service. "They like the idea of an apartment which enables them to create a home away from home."

The company offers privately owned flats, with or without service, in London or Paris. The Athenaeum Hotel in central London has some 33 apartments with their own entrance and kitchens, and 157 hotel rooms. Apartments start at £225 a night plus VAT, although the price falls the longer the stay.

The growth in popularity in apartments is also encouraging more people to let their homes for short periods. A London company, Home From Home, offers private properties. They start from £350 a week. Apartment Service: 0181-944 1444; Home From Home: 0171-584 8914.

Air France strike adds to confusion

By STEVE KEENAN

A STRIKE by Air France crews added extra confusion for holiday and business travellers trying to reach France yesterday.

The two-day stoppage ends today, when only three of 11 Heathrow-Paris services are expected to operate, taking 1,000 much-needed seats off the market.

Flights have been running full since the Channel Tunnel blaze ten days ago halted Eurostar services. British Airways has added bigger planes and coach services have been increased.

While airlines and coach services have benefited from Eurostar's closure, tens of thousands of shoppers planning a trip on the car-carrying Le Shuttle service through the tunnel have cancelled plans to travel to the Continent.

P&O European Ferries reported an increase of 57 per cent in passenger figures in the ten days since the blaze, from 147,000 in the same period last year to 231,000. Car numbers increased in the same period from 31,000 to 50,000, up 60 per cent.

But adding figures from other ferry operators, an estimated 10,000 motorists who planned to travel through the tunnel have not switched to the ferries and decided not to travel.

Talks to end the dispute were being held in France yesterday. But apart from a one-hour stoppage at Calais,

the P&O spokesman said tourist cars had not been affected by the drivers' action.

At this time of year, most cars heading for France are aiming for Channel ports to stock up on Christmas wine, spirits and beer and the ferries are buoyant at the windfall.

Both P&O and Stena have added extra ships and there is plenty of capacity for people who want to travel. Travellers heading for Paris are not so fortunate.

Air France was also forced to cancel four of its 11 Heathrow-Paris flights yesterday. Flights to Paris from Manchester, Edinburgh and Birmingham are also cancelled today, although services from London City are unaffected.

Eurostar had been running around 12,000 people a day to Paris, more than the combined air capacity of BA, Air France, British Midland and Air UK. BA is adding an extra service today in addition to its 17 Heathrow and Gatwick flights to Paris, which are already full.

On Friday and Saturday, it is also using larger aircraft, replacing 180-seat planes with 250-seater Boeing 767s. "It will give us 30 per cent more capacity," BA said.

Coach operator Eurolines has more than doubled its services from London Victoria to Paris with extra coaches running overnight and a third scheduled service planned.

Jersey aims to cash in on wedding market

JERSEY is enticing the growing number of couples planning to marry abroad to turn their back on the Caribbean and wed in the Channel Islands instead, Steve Keenan writes.

The island has changed its marriage laws to allow wedding applications by post, and couples now have to spend only two days on Jersey before the ceremony.

The cost of a holiday and wedding there will average at around £1,000 — compared with the average Caribbean bill of £4,000, rising to £6,000 in the Seychelles or Mauritius.

Crystal Holidays is charging couples £429 for a wedding package on Jersey, which includes the Registrar Office and licence, champagne, wedding cake, bouquet and buttonhole. The price does not include flights or hotels.

"Perhaps it is not so tropical in Jersey but it is a lot cheaper than the Caribbean," says Deborah Marshall, Crystal's product director. "We have had quite a few inquiries already."

An estimated 10,000 couples married abroad last year, says Cosmos, which claims 10 per cent of the market. The company recently published its new *Dream Weddings & Honeymoons* brochure and predicts a 20 per cent growth in the market this year.

Dreaming of Christmas sun

MORE than 70 per cent of Britons will spend Christmas at home with the family — but most will be dreaming of getting away from it all to lie instead under a palm tree in the sun, Harvey Elliott writes.

Given unlimited cash and time, only 12 per cent of the population would choose to stay at home, according to a survey by Gallup for Visa Holiday Money.

Nearly 40 per cent ideally

would like to spend Christmas on a tropical island, 20 per cent in Florida and 17 per cent chose either New Zealand or Egypt.

But it is the sun which is the biggest attraction with well over half those questioned admitting that they did not like the British weather at Christmas. It is estimated that at least a million people suffer from SAD (seasonal affective disorder).



Most Britons dream of wintering on a tropical beach

CHRISTMAS BARGAINS

EIGHT nights in Madeira, with a flight from Gatwick on Christmas Eve, is on offer for £499 a person with Cadogan Holidays (01703 332661); a ten-night cruise visiting the island and the Canaries is available for £810 from Waves (0171-431 7373); and Advantage Travel Centres (0990 881888) has low-price holidays in Portugal and skiing in Scandinavia. For single people, Solo's (0181-951 2800) has treats in Sorrento and Lapland.

British projects reach tourism award finals

By TONY DAWE

A BRITISH group which provides volunteers for conservation projects abroad and Northern Ireland's first rural tourism co-operative have been shortlisted for a leading travel award sponsored by British Airways.

They are among 15 finalists drawn from more than 100 entries worldwide for the 1996 Tourism for Tomorrow awards, which are designed to encourage the careful environmental management of tourism projects.

The scheme run by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers has sent holidaymakers to help to monitor turtles in Turkey, protect orchids in Canada and manage wetlands in Japan. The Lakeland Country

Breaks co-operative is offering rural holiday packages in 11 Fermanagh villages as part of a project to help local communities without overwhelming them with tourists. The two schemes are joined as finalists for the UK region by the Scottish Tourism and Environment Initiative.

The 15 finalists have been drawn from five regions and a global winner will be announced by Sir Colin Marshall, BA chairman, in February. Other finalists include a thriving blue penguin colony in New Zealand which has been developed from an old quarry in just four years, and Wind, Sand and Stars, a small Egyptian tour operator which takes tourists to the south Sinai desert.

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13. Come To Jesus Mahalia Jackson

44 CHARITIES AT CHRISTMAS

THE TIMES THURSDAY NOVEMBER 28 1996

Charity chase for the lottery handouts

The National Lottery Charities Board announced its latest "theme" for the next round of grants to voluntary bodies yesterday. Simultaneously, it opened a telephone line to take requests for its guide on how to apply for those grants.

Demand will far exceed the amount of money available at present about one in five applications succeeds. Since its first meeting in August 1994, the board has handed out £18 million in 4,757 grants to charity groups, some of which may also be eligible for money from one of the other ten grant-making bodies distributing National Lottery funds.

The charities board's latest themes — "new opportunities and choices" and "voluntary sector development" — aim to "fund projects which extend non-formal learning and volunteering opportunities", and those that promote self-help.

"Voluntary sector development" is meant to attract umbrella bodies, development agencies and resource centres that service other voluntary or community groups. From January 20 until March 7 the telephone line will record requests for application forms, to be returned by April 4, from those hoping to attract some of the millions of pounds the board has to give away.

So far there have been three "themed" rounds of grant-giving from the charities board. The first, last year, targeted poverty. Charities working to alleviate poverty and improve the quality of life of

As the cash applications are invited, Pat Blair looks at the varied pattern of giving today

people and communities were eligible to apply. The money was available for capital or revenue use. There was a flood of applications — more than 15,000, requesting a total of £2.4 billion. Between October and December the board paid out £160 million to 2,460 projects.

The board then focused on "youth issues" and "low income", provoking protest from some medical research charities that they were not getting a slice of the cake as their work had not fitted into any of the themes.

However, the third grants programme, encompassing health, disability and care, met some of those objections and attracted more than 10,000 applicants. On December 10 the first tranche of applicants will know what they can expect of more than £100 million waiting to be distributed.

National Lottery money, however, amounts to only about 2 or 3 per cent of the voluntary sector's income, which is still dominated by gifts from the public, through legacies, street collections, selling goods and services, corporate donations and other means.

In 1995, for example, companies paid out £162 million in cash sponsorship, while legacies to charities have been about £1 billion a year for three years, says Cathy Pharoah, head of research at the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF).

CAF's 1995 analysis of the accounts of the top 500 corporate donors, published in May, suggests that giving by companies has increased slightly after declining for a few years. However, although the figures have gone up, the rise is less than the inflation rate.

In 1995 companies' total community investment, including "gifts in kind", amounted to £284.6 million. Mrs Pharoah says companies almost certainly under-record such gifts — equipment, training, secondment, non-cash support, donation of written-off stock — and believes much more is being done than is apparent from company returns.

Last November the CAF commissioned a study from the Institute of Fiscal Studies looking at long-term trends in individual giving. The study, nearing completion, takes evidence from Family Expenditure Surveys since the early 1980s and shows that the number of people giving to charity is dropping, although the fall has been offset by an increase in the amounts from

people participating in planned giving, through such schemes as covenants and give-as-you-earn.

At the same time legacies provided 33 per cent of the top 500 charities' income in 1995, according to Mrs Pharoah's research. However, although the number of charitable bequests is still increasing, the rate of increase has slowed. What is more, the value of bequests decreased by about 3 per cent between 1992 and 1994.

This year there have been other problems in Scotland, where local government spending cuts have followed reorganisation. Martin Sims, director of the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, says: "It has had a devastating effect on many organisations, particularly those that were dependent on local government finance." He estimates that about £10 million has been lost from a total local authority contribution of about £120 million, a loss of 8 per cent.

Charities suffered a further disappointment recently when Customs and Excise won a court case challenging their exemption from paying VAT on job advertisements. Mr Sims says that, as the Treasury gains substantial sums from National Lottery proceeds, it would be a welcome move if the Government imposed a windfall tax on its own receipts and steered it, somehow, back towards charitable groups.

● National Lottery Charities Board application line: 0345 919191



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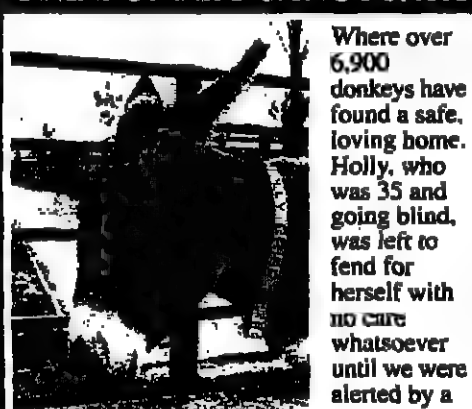
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Many men assume that, on their death, all they own will automatically go to their wives. This isn't so. When a man dies intestate, not just his wife but brothers, sisters and even cousins may have a claim on what he owned.

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Christmas Appeal

The Friends of Bristol Horse Society is a registered charity which provides retirement for equines on a nationwide basis. However, continual rising costs and an increased demand in our work only serves to make this the most difficult time in our calendar.

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Court did not pronounce on lawfulness of detention

Chahal v United Kingdom
(Case 70/1995)
Before R. Rysdahl, President and Judges R. Bernhardt, F. Gökçilgi, F. Matscher, L.-E. Pettit, A. Spielmann, D. M. Vassallo, S. K. Mahoney, E. Palm, J. M. Morenilla, Sir John Freland, A. B. Baka, G. Mifsud Bonnici, J. Makarczyk, D. Gutwirth, J. Jambrek, U. Lohmeyer and E. Levits
Registrar H. F. P. Mahoney
Judgment November 15

There was a real risk of an asylum applicant, if he were deported from the United Kingdom to India, being subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading punishment in violation of article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The European Court of Human Rights, which had to decide whether or not Mr Chahal's detention was lawful, found that there had been a violation of article 3 of the Convention in conjunction with article 5 in that effective remedies did not exist before the courts in England.

Furthermore, the Court held, unanimously, that there had been a violation of article 5.4 in that Mr Chahal, had been denied the opportunity to have the lawfulness of his detention decided by a national court.

Article 3 of the Convention provides: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

Article 5 provides: "Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be deprived of his liberty save in the following cases and in accordance with a procedure prescribed by law: (i) the lawful arrest or detention of a person...

On August 14, 1990 the Home Secretary (then Mr. Hurd) decided to deport Mr Chahal from the United Kingdom on the ground of national security.

It was alleged inter alia that he had been involved in supplying funds and equipment to terrorists in Punjab, planning and directing terrorist attacks in India, the United Kingdom and elsewhere.

Article 5 provides: "Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be deprived of his liberty save in the following cases and in accordance with a procedure prescribed by law: (i) the lawful arrest or detention of a person...

On August 16, 1990 he was taken to Belmarsh Prison, where he had since been held.

in the interests of national security.

Article 13 provides: "Everyone whose rights and freedoms as set forth in this Convention are violated shall have an effective remedy before a national authority."

The applicants were two Indian citizens, Karanjit Singh Chahal and his wife, Dardshan Kaur Chahal, and their two children, Kiranpreet Kaur Chahal and Bikanpreet Singh Chahal, who were British citizens. All the applicants were Sikhs.

The first applicant entered the United Kingdom illegally in 1971. In 1974 he was granted indefinite leave to remain by the Home Office under the terms of an amnesty for illegal entrants. The second applicant settled in the United Kingdom in 1975, where the children were born.

Mr Chahal visited Punjab in 1984, shortly before the storming of the Golden Temple in Amritsar by the Indian army. During his visit he began to adhere to the tenets of orthodox Sikhism and became involved in organising passive resistance in support of an independent Sikh homeland, Khalistan, which would roughly correspond to the Indian state of Punjab. He was arrested, detained for 21 days and tortured by the Punjab police.

On his return to the United Kingdom he became a prominent figure in the affairs of British Sikhs. He was twice charged with assault and affray arising out of disturbances in temples, but on the first occasion the Court of Appeal quashed the conviction and on the second he was acquitted. He was not known to have been charged with any other criminal offence in the United Kingdom, India or elsewhere.

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On August 16, 1990 he was taken to Belmarsh Prison, where he had since been held.

He applied for political asylum, claiming that he would be a victim of torture and persecution if he were deported to India. The Home Secretary refused this request on March 27, 1991.

Mr Chahal had no right of appeal to an independent tribunal because of the national security elements of the case. However, on July 10, 1991, the matter was considered by an advisory panel, including a Court of Appeal Judge, Lord Justice Lloyd, and a former President of the Immigration Appeal Tribunal.

Mr Chahal was not informed of the evidence supporting the Home Secretary's allegations against him. He was not allowed to be represented by a lawyer and was not informed of the panel's advice to the Home Secretary, who was, in any case, not obliged to follow it.

The Home Secretary (then Mr. Baker) finally signed the deportation order on July 25, 1991. Mr Chahal's application for judicial review of the decision to refuse asylum was successful because the reasoning given to explain it had been inadequate.

On June 1, 1992 the Home Secretary (then Mr. Clarke) took a fresh decision to refuse asylum. Mr Chahal again sought judicial review. After that application was refused in the High Court (The Times May 8 1993; Series A No 201 p28 paragraphs 69-70) and *Vivuranj and Others v United Kingdom* (The Times November 11, 1993; Series A No 215 p34 paragraph 103).

The Court of Appeal held that the Home Secretary had been required to weigh the threat to Mr Chahal's life or freedom if he were deported against the danger to national security if he were permitted to stay. See *R v Secretary of State for the Home Department, Ex parte Chahal* (The Times October 27, 1993 [1993] 1 WLR 526).

When refusing asylum, the Home Secretary appeared to have taken into account the evidence relating to the risk of persecution in India and that it was not possible for the court to judge whether his decision to deport Mr Chahal was irrational or perverse, because it did not have access to the counterbalancing national security evidence. In March 1994, the House of Lords refused leave to appeal.

Following the report of the Indian Commission on Human Rights, Mr Chahal applied to be released pending the decision of the Court. That application was refused by Mr Justice Macpherson in the Divisional Court on November 10, 1995, on the ground that he was unable to rule that the decision

to keep Mr Chahal in detention was irrational or perverse, particularly bearing in mind that the evidence relating to national security on which it was based was not available to him.

The application was lodged with the European Commission of Human Rights on July 27, 1993 and declared admissible on September 1, 1994.

In its judgment, the European Commission of Human Rights held as follows:

I Alleged violation of article 3
Mr Chahal claimed that if he were deported to India there was a risk that he would be tortured in breach of article 3 of the Convention.

A Applicability of article 3 to expulsion cases
It was well established in the case law of the Court that expulsion by a contracting state might give rise to an issue under article 3 of the Convention where substantial grounds had been shown for believing that an individual, if expelled, would face a real risk of being subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in the receiving country.

Although there had been a change in leadership in 1995, the Director General who had provided over some of the worst abuses this decade had only been replaced by his former deputy and intelligence chief.

Less than two years ago that same police force was carrying out well documented raids into other Indian states. The applicant's claim, that any recent reduction in the unlawful activity of the Punjab police stemmed from the fact that all the key figures in the campaign for Sikh separatism had been killed, forced abroad or rendered inactive by torture or the fear of torture, could not entirely be discounted.

The Court also found it significant that attested allegations of serious human rights violations had been levelled at the police elsewhere in India, for example, by the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on Torture and the Indian National Human Rights Commission.

The Court did not doubt the good faith of the Indian Government, which had made assurances to the British Government that Mr Chahal "would have no reason to expect to suffer mistreatment of any kind at the hands of the Indian authorities".

However, despite the efforts of

the Indian authorities to bring about reform, problems persisted. Against that background, the assurances were an inadequate guarantee of safety.

The Court further considered that Mr Chahal's high profile and the serious, albeit untested, allegations made against him by the British Government would be likely to make him a target of interest for hard-line elements in the security forces.

Accordingly, the Court held, Judges Gökçilgi, Matscher, Sir John Freland, Baka, Gutwirth, Mifsud Bonnici and Levits dissenting, that the order for Mr Chahal's deportation to India, if implemented, would give rise to a violation of article 3.

II Alleged violation of article 5
A Article 5.1
It was not disputed that Mr Chahal had been detained "with a view to deportation" within the meaning of article 5.1(b). Under that provision, all that was required was that action was being taken with a view to deportation.

It was immaterial whether the underlying decision to expel was lawful and it was not necessary to show that the detention was "reasonably considered necessary", for example to prevent the commission of an offence or escape. The deportation proceedings had, however, to be conducted with due diligence; otherwise, the detention would cease to be permissible under the Convention.

The period under consideration commenced on August 16, 1990, when Mr Chahal was first detained, and ended on March 3, 1994, when the House of Lords refused leave to appeal.

Although he had remained in custody until the present day, that latter period should be distinguished because during that time the Government had refrained from deporting him in compliance with a request made by the Secretary of State under its Rules of Procedure.

Mr Chahal's case had involved considerations of an extremely serious and weighty nature. It had been neither in his interests nor in the general public interest in the administration of justice that such effective control by the domestic courts whenever they chose to assert that national security and terrorism were involved.

It was possible to employ techniques which both accommodated legitimate security concerns about the nature and sources of intelligence information and yet accorded the individual a substantial measure of procedural justice.

In conclusion, the Court held unanimously that there had been a violation of article 5.4.

III Alleged violation of article 8
Given the Court's finding that if Mr Chahal were to be deported to India there would be a violation of article 3, it was not necessary to decide whether it could also constitute an unjustifiable interference with the applicants' family life, in violation of article 8.

IV Alleged violation of article 13
The applicants claimed that they did not have available to them effective domestic remedies in relation to their complaints under articles 3, 5 and 8. In view of its findings under articles 3.4 and 5.8, the Court only had to examine the complaint under article 13 combined with article 3.

Given the fundamental importance of the prohibition of torture and the irreversible nature of the harm that might occur if the risk of ill treatment materialised, an effective remedy for Mr Chahal's article 3 complaint required independent scrutiny of his claim that he would be ill treated if deported to India.

That scrutiny had to be carried out without regard to what might have been done to warrant expulsion or to any perceived threat to national security, since these considerations were immaterial in connection with article 3.

However, neither the advisory panel nor the courts could review the decision to deport him to India with reference solely to the question of risk, leaving aside national security considerations.

Accordingly, the Court held unanimously that there had been a violation of Article 13.

V Application of article 50
In view of its decision that there had been no violation of article 3, the Court made no award of damages in respect of the period of time Mr Chahal had spent in detention. It considered that the findings of violation constituted sufficient satisfaction in respect of the other complaints.

The applicants had claimed reimbursement of their legal costs in the Strasbourg proceedings, totalling £77,755.97. The Court considered that excessive and awarded £45,000, less the £1,441 French francs already paid in legal aid by the Council of Europe.

Court of Appeal

Law Report November 28 1996

Court of Appeal

How to qualify as a witness

Regina v Miller
Before Lord Justice Rose, Mr Justice Latham and Mr Justice Hooper
[Judgment November 14]

A person who did not give oral evidence but whose statement was read at trial pursuant to section 23 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 was a witness for the purposes of section 10(1)(b) of the Criminal Evidence Act 1998 and the judge could permit cross-examination of the defendant on his previous convictions where imputations had been made against that person by the defence.

The Court of Appeal, Criminal Division, so held in dismissing an appeal by Vance Miller against his conviction in November 1995 at Manchester Crown Court (Judge Hammond and a jury) of two

counts of false imprisonment, one of kidnapping and one of affray for which he was sentenced to concurrent terms of 18 months imprisonment.

Mr Michael Blakey, who did not appear below, for the appellant Mr Bernard Lever for the Crown.

LORD JUSTICE ROSE, giving the judgment of the court, said that the prosecution case was that the appellant had kidnapped one Robert Macey and his common-law wife, Carol Jones. They had been neighbours of the appellant and the offences took place against a background of a missing or stolen kitchen unit.

At the trial, on an application made under section 23 of the 1988 Act, the statement of Carol Jones was read because she failed to attend court through fear.

The appellant, who had chosen to represent himself at the crown court, called a Mr Muggeridge made imputations against Carol Jones. The judge, accordingly, in a statement of a witness the subject of a conditional witness order or a notice of additional evidence in accordance with section 9 of the Criminal Justice Act 1967 which might be read at trial; or orally in evidence.

In all three cases, there was placed before the jury evidence of equal weight for their consideration. A witness was none the less a witness if, dead, beyond the seas, unfit, not required or unwilling through fear.

Solicitors: Burton Copeland, Manchester; Crown Prosecution Service, North West.

deposition before justices which might subsequently be read at the trial in accordance with section 13(3) of the Criminal Justice Act 1967. The judge, accordingly, in a statement of a witness the subject of a conditional witness order or a notice of additional evidence in accordance with section 9 of the Criminal Justice Act 1967 which might be read at trial; or orally in evidence.

In all three cases, there was placed before the jury evidence of equal weight for their consideration. A witness was none the less a witness if, dead, beyond the seas, unfit, not required or unwilling through fear.

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Procedure changes in Patents Court

Patents Court: Practice explanation
Desired alterations in procedure in the Patents Court, partly to remove possible confusions in authority, were handed down by Mr Justice Jacob in the Chancery Division on February 19.

Orders following judgment: 1 Where a judgment was made available in draft before being given in open court and it was desired to ask the court for an order when judgment was given, the parties should, in advance of that occasion, exchange drafts of the desired consequential order. It was highly undesirable that one party should spring a proposal on the other for the first time when judgment was given.

Experiments not part of normal research: 2 The position of the admission at trial of evidence of experiments conducted for litigious purposes but not specifically for the case in hand required clarification.

Order 104, rule 12 of the Rules of the Supreme Court referred to establishing "any fact by experimental proof". That included experiments done in other jurisdictions or any other experiments not done as part of normal research.

In future the standard form of order made on the summons for directions (itself subject to variation for any particular case) should read as follows:

"Where a party desires to establish any fact by experimental proof, including an experiment conducted for the purposes of litigation or otherwise not being an experiment conducted in the normal course of research, he shall (unless appropriate provisions as to service of a notice of experiments) be required to do so by the following terms: (a) the experiment shall be conducted in the presence of the court or a judge or a judge's clerk; (b) the experiment shall be conducted in the presence of the court or a judge or a judge's clerk; (c) the experiment shall be conducted in the presence of the court or a judge or a judge's clerk; (d) the experiment shall be conducted in the presence of the court or a judge or a judge's clerk; (e) the experiment shall be conducted in the presence of the court or a judge or a judge's clerk; (f) the experiment shall be conducted in the presence of the court or a judge or a judge's clerk; (g) the experiment shall be conducted in the presence of the court or a judge or a judge's clerk; 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CRICKET

West Indies fear Warne's ability on imperfect pitch

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT, IN SYDNEY

IF Michael Jackson is a cricket follower, which seems highly improbable, he might be mortified by the suspicion that his visit to Australia has helped to sabotage the hopes and aspirations of the West Indies team.

The American musician gave a concert last week at the Sydney Cricket Ground. It attracted mixed reviews, as has the subsequent discovery of an unusually bare pitch for the Test match which begins on the ground tomorrow.

Australia, who have Shane Warne, are delighted; West Indies, who have no spin bowler worthy of the name, are desolate.

Officials are busily denying a link between the concert and the state of the surface, but it is irrefutable that the timing of Jackson's show exacerbated the problems of the ground staff in preparing a suitable pitch a month earlier than the traditional Sydney Test date. It is also questionable whether the growing trend of using sports ground for mass attendance concerns is appropriate to the peculiar requirements of cricket.

Graham Halbish, chief executive of the Australian Cricket Board (ACB), blames Pakistan for the rescheduling of the Sydney game. "For the second year running, they were unable to arrive as early as they said they would," he explained. "This meant we

could not get our one-day series properly started at the usual time and had to fit in another Test."

Halbish was highly satisfied by the match attendance of more than 50,000 in Brisbane, 15,000 above the ACB budget and the biggest Test crowd at the Gabba since 1982, but he warned that the second Test may suffer for being considered premature. "Sydney people like to have their Test match during holiday time," he said.

However, a more pressing question than whether Sydney is ready for the West Indies is whether the West Indies are ready for Sydney. Courtney Walsh, their noble captain, was making all the right noises yesterday, but he is well aware of his team's shocking record on the ground and of the probability that prevailing conditions will conspire against them.

Already, they are 1-0 down in the series after a first Test that they could and should have dictated from the time they won the toss on an opening morning, when the pitch was responsive to seam. Now, in an entirely different environment, West Indies will be hard-pressed to avoid a second defeat, with all the potential that carries for fractured spirit and diminished ambition.

Faced with the damning record of only two wins in 12

Sydney Tests, Walsh prefers to concentrate on a different statistic. "Last time we came here, four years ago, we lost a Test match and then came from behind to win the series," he pointed out.

That, however, was with a team of greater accomplishment, scope and mobility than the present combination, which relies too heavily on the batting of Brian Lara — who made 277 in Sydney in 1993 — and the bowling, still demanding but noticeably ageing, of Walsh and Curtly Ambrose.

One of the more blatant problems afflicting the West Indies is the lack of a settled opening pair. Another is the absence of a high-quality wicketkeeper to support the pace attack. This is nothing new. They have been struggling for some years to replace the peerless batting partnership of Gordon Greenidge and Desmond Haynes and to find a suitable successor to Jeffrey Dujon.

Nor is it an original thought that they lack the variety of an effective spin bowler. This has been an omission, largely of their own design, for most of the past 20 years. Suddenly, though, it is dragging them down because their own fast bowling is not what it was and because opposition countries offer more mature and penetrative spin than for many years past.

To come to Australia without a single specialist slow bowler, as West Indies have done, is tantamount to an admission of limitations and, perhaps, to a concession of this Sydney Test. Whether Australia choose to play Peter McIntyre as a second leg spinner, or settle for Michael Bevan and Mark Waugh as part-timers, Warne has the perfect opportunity to confirm his rehabilitation.

Australia (from): M A Taylor (captain), M T G Elliott, R T Ponting, M S Waugh, S S Blewett, M G Bevan, I A Healy, S K Warne, P R Warne, G D McGrath, M S Kasprowicz, J N Gillespie, P F McQuinn.

WEST INDIES (from): S C Campbell, R G Samuels, S C Lara, B Chandrasekhar, C L Hooper, J C Adams, C O Brown, I R Bishop, C E L Ambrose, K C B Benjamin, C A Walsh (captain), N A M McLean.

Scoreboard, page 47

Openers lay fine base

ANDREW HUDSON and Gary Kirsten, the South Africa openers, hammered the India bowling attack, helping their side to an impressive 339 for two at the end of the first day of the second Test match, in Calcutta yesterday.

Hudson made 146 and Kirsten contributed 102 in a stand of 236 which fell just 24 runs short of South Africa's first-wicket record set by Jack Sleide and Bruce Mitchell against England in 1950.

The pair took advantage of

perfect batting conditions and sloppy fielding by India, who dropped three catches in front of a crowd of 85,000 at Eden Gardens as South Africa set about averaging the 64-run deficit in the first Test in Ahmedabad last week.

Javagal Srinath broke Kirsten's stumps with an in-cutter in the first over after tea. Hudson was dismissed an hour before the close by Venkatesh Prasad.



David Lloyd, the coach, makes a point to Alec Stewart during England's net session in Harare yesterday

Houghton relies on inside edge

Simon Wilde finds the Zimbabwe coach quietly confident about the Test series

David Houghton sat on the verandah outside the colonial-style pavilion at the Harare Sports Club and watched the groundstaff putting the finishing touches to two of the pitches that the touring England cricket team will play on in the next week. Between them, looking equally virginal and true, lay the strip for the second Test match that starts on Boxing Day.

Houghton, Zimbabwe's leading batsman and coach, has seen countless international sides play at this oasis of rural charm in the country's capital and knows how to read the run. "I am quietly optimistic," he said. "We will give them more of a fight than they think we will."

Such confidence is surprising for a man so intimately involved with a team that has won only one of its 20 Test matches and he concedes that on occasions it has been severely tested.

No wonder. On the face of it, Zimbabwe's cricketing resources are pitifully thin. The country possesses only about 350 adults who play the game seriously — mainly in week-

end leagues — and there are only two first-class teams, Mashonaland and Matabeleland, and just nine professionals, including Houghton.

The national squad rarely meets en masse because of the business commitments of its amateur members. Last week-end, for example, Mashonaland were deprived of three of their leading players because Mark Dekker had to handle a shipment of ostriches. Andy Waller was planting tobacco on his farm and Eddo Brander's chicken flock was sick.

Against that, the game has a strong base within schools and is being taken up enthusiastically by black Africans, three of whom played recently against Pakistan. And if one takes account of the Zimbabweans who left home to pursue professional careers before Test status was granted — such as Graeme Hick, Kevin Curran, Trevor Penney and Steve Elworthy — there is hardly a dearth of talent.

"I have sometimes gone home at night and thought to myself that we should really not be playing Test cricket," Houghton said. "But then I

think of the terrible struggles sides like West Indies had in their early years as a Test country and realise that these are still early days. We have not been disgraced. We must just hold it together and continue to expand our base. But I am impatient and want results."

So from where does Houghton's self-belief about England's visit spring? It comes, perhaps, from the knowledge that England have come to win while Zimbabwe would be satisfied to draw the two Tests. "We have no con-

trol over the preparation of the pitches," Houghton said, "but I have spoken to the head groundsmen and he says he is preparing two pitches to last five days. They will not be raging turners." England, he implies, may get frustrated.

However, the key factor is that Houghton possesses an intimate knowledge of the opposition having worked as Worcestershire's coach for two years. He is also a fine player in his own right, the holder of the record Test score for his country (266 against Sri Lanka two years ago) and averaging almost 50 in his international career.

Houghton has prepared pictures of the touring party and further insights will be passed on to his side nearer the start of the international in mid-December, one of which will doubtless be England's perceived weakness against leg spin bowling. Zimbabwe possess a highly promising leg spinner in Paul Slingsby.

Houghton is 39, the oldest man playing Test cricket, and he intends to retire early next year. "The basis of my playing give up has always been the same. I want to see my family and I hardly ever do. It is the playing that must stop because I am very keen to carry on coaching in England."



Houghton: positive

SPORTS POLITICS

Governing bodies hit by cutback in funding

BY JOHN GOODBODY

THE Government yesterday broke its pledge that money from the National Lottery would not affect the revenue funding of the sports councils. Figures from the Department of National Heritage confirmed that there will be a ten per cent cut in public funding of the United Kingdom and English Sports Councils between 1995 and 2000, even if inflation remains static.

The councils will get £45.4 million for 1997-98 compared with £47.5 million in the present year. Even if the £400,000 earmarked for children's play, which next year will be given to the National Playing Fields Association, is discounted, the total figure still represented the second successive year that funding has declined.

The Government yesterday argued that the money was exactly what had been originally budgeted and planned a year ago. Iain Sproat, the Minister for Sport, said after speaking at the annual conference of the Central Council of Physical Recreation (CCPR) at Market Bosworth, that the funding was at a standstill this year.

He said: "The Treasury wanted to cut public spending for the reasons which the Chancellor explained yesterday [in the Budget] and sport had to play its part. There was so much money coming into sport from elsewhere that there was no doubt that it had an influence on the Treasury's thinking. It is not just the National Lottery but the amount of money from television."

Mr Sproat did not explain that most of the smaller bodies aided by the sports councils do not benefit from the huge sums available from television contracts with large organisations, such as the FA Premier League. However, it is true that many sports will be helped by the £40 million of new funding for elite athletes announced recently.

Mr Sproat told the conference that he expected the sports councils to make some "further modest savings". He said: "There is still room for further efficiency savings at the sports council level. The mission nowadays is to seek continual improvement. We cannot stand still."



HOW THE AFFECTS HIGHER EDUCATION

Full details and analysis of what the Chancellor has in store for higher and further education in The Times Higher Education Supplement at newsagents tomorrow.

OUT TOMORROW

THE TIMES
HIGHER
EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

BY ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

Many experts, and most spectators, dislike complicated bidding systems. Demetri Marchessini's "Natural" means have certainly played good and entertaining bridge using simple methods comprehensible to the man in the street. The organisers of the Macallan international pairs tournament are following this approach for the 1997 event only simple bidding systems will be allowed. However, I think it is clear that an artificial method played well has an edge over a natural one. The prize for the "best bid hand" at the 1996 Lederer Memorial Trophy was won by Jason and Justin Hackett, for this effort.

Dealer East	Love all	IMPs
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This is the explanation of the bidding:
(1) Asking for five-card majors.
(2) Denying a five-card major.
(3) Showing four hearts, forcing to 2 NT.
(4) Denying four hearts and showing less than a maximum.
(5) Natural and forcing.
(6) Showing three-card heart support.
(7) Well judged.
Four Hearts is much the best game contract. 3 NT goes two off on a spade lead, and with the king of diamonds

wrong Five Diamonds also goes down. Four Hearts makes when the hearts are 3-3 or, if they are 4-2, if the king of diamonds is onside.

I don't advocate such complicated methods, but from time to time they undoubtedly score a goal — after South has opened 1 NT there is no reasonable way to Four Hearts using natural methods.

Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

By Philip Howard

PYKNIC

a. An alfresco supper
b. A computer cursor
c. Short and squat

ZEIGARNIK

a. A Balkan irregular
b. A sacrifice at Chess
c. Remembering work

EMUNCTORY

a. Horrific
b. A feudal Court official
c. Nose-blowing

LIMPOPO

a. A surrogate father
b. The avocado
c. A Nigerian chieftain

Answers on page 50

KEENE on CHESS

BY RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

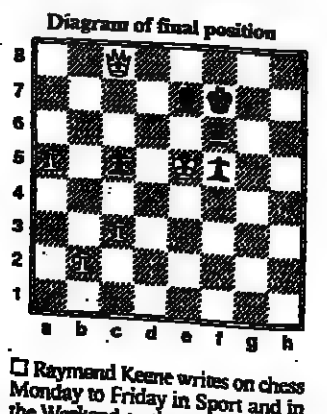
Top marks

Although Bulgaria has produced a number of strong players in post-war chess, such as Borislav Trajkov, Pavlovsky and Kiriakov, it is only in recent years that a Bulgarian grandmaster has penetrated to the highest echelons of international chess. Veselin Topalov has defeated Kasparov on several occasions, earned a place at Las Palmas by virtue of his ranking in the world's top six, and notched up an enviable stream of first prizes in top events in 1996. He is also no respecter of great names, as the game today shows.

White: Veselin Topalov
Black: Garry Kasparov
Amsterdam 1996

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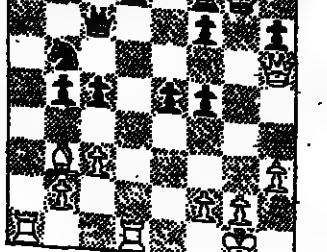
31	Re1	b6
32	h4	g7
33	g5	h6
34	g6	h7
35	h4	h7
36	h4	h7
37	h4	h7
38	h4	h7
39	h4	h7
40	h4	h7
41	h4	h7
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56	h4	h7
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58	h4	h7
59	h4	h7
60	h4	h7



Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is from the game Alekhine — Jung, Carrow 1942. Although Black is a pawn ahead, his position on the kingside has been broken-up. How did Alekhine now exploit this to win material?



Solution on page 50

Another beef in the war against steroids

Do you fancy a job in sport? An exercise-related career can often sound irresistible to a young man or woman eager to cash in on a dedication to physical fitness and healthy living. Here, though, is one offer that is more sad than exciting — and enough to make every true sports enthusiast wince.

It appeared in *The Guardian* last week: a job advertisement placed by the Harrow and Hillingdon Healthcare NHS Trust. It was for a "Steroid Worker". Harrow Community Drug and Alcohol service is seeking a skilled worker "to provide information and advice to people using, or contemplating using, steroids. Strategies will include the provision of sterile needles/syringes to injecting steroid users and work with local gyms". Applicants, who should be qualified in counselling, psychology or social work, are advised that "experience of bodybuilding would be an advantage".

"If you can't beat 'em, at least give 'em clean needles," seems to be the philosophy here; and the message that is sent out to thousands of young sportsmen is that steroid use is an everyday ingredient of sporting life. It is a message of despair, but, in the world of sport and drugs, there is much despair. There is despair at the grassroots level of the gymnasium, and there is despair at the very pinnacle of sport.

At the weekend, it was reported



that Dean Capobianco, an Australian sprinter, who is facing a four-year ban after a positive test for anabolic steroids, is fighting the case with an ingenious defence. He is claiming that the eating of meat from cows that may have been beefed up using anabolic agents can cause an otherwise innocent athlete to test positive for performance enhancing drugs. If the defence works, we shall no doubt hear of a lot more sportsmen loading up on beef and bravely ignoring the dangers of CJD.

Capobianco said that his evidence has been served on the International Amateur Athletic Federation. "I can imagine they are in a panic about the ramifications for their whole drug-testing programme," he said.

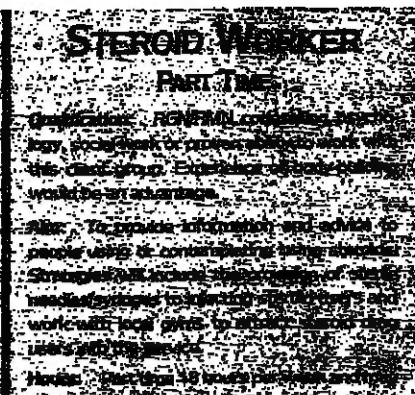
"What drugs-testing programme?" some might ask. Yesterday Prince Alexandre de Merode, the medical chief of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), announced that 16

athletes returned suspicious urine samples at the Olympic Games in Atlanta this year, although only two were banned. "Juridical grounds" and "technical doubts" saved the others.

The previous time the Olympics were in the United States, in Los Angeles in 1984, documents relating to nine positive drug tests at the Games were, according to IOC officials, inadvertently shredded by a hotel cleaner.

There is, sadly, no lack of evidence of the widespread abuse of drugs in sport at all levels. In the aftermath of Ben Johnson's disqualification after winning the 100 metres at the 1988 Games, inquiries were launched in Canada and Australia and concluded that drug abuse was common in top-class sport and that anabolic steroid use has spread into recreational sport and exercise. Users can now be found in large numbers among semi-elite sportsmen and women, and health and fitness enthusiasts — none of whom are subjected to testing.

The line between drugs in sport and drugs in society is becoming increasingly blurred, and children as young as 12 are getting hold of steroids in a bid to build bodies like their muscle-bound role models. A survey last year estimated that 100,000 Britons under the age of 16



Vacancy at Harrow and Hillingdon

are using anabolic steroids. Schemes like the one advertised are now not uncommon, and follow evidence that an increasing number of syringe exchange schemes set up for drug users have noticed that anabolic steroid users are using their services. Such centres have witnessed the sight of apparently super-fit young sportsmen lining up alongside malnourished drug addicts to collect their hand-out of clean needles. A study in 1991 found that 5 per cent of all clients at 21 syringe exchanges in England and Wales were steroid users.

Dr Huw Perry, a bodybuilder who has studied steroid abuse for the West Glamorgan Health Authority, has said that 40 per cent of addicts at South Wales needle exchanges are now steroid users.

None of this could happen without a regular supply of the drugs and the law gives the pushers far too easy a ride. The penalty for supplying steroids has been increased this year to a maximum of five years' imprisonment and an unlimited fine.

You can, however, turn up at the gym with a sports bag stuffed full of them, but unless it can be proved that you are selling them, the law cannot touch you — madness!

Anyone who thinks that the use of such drugs is simply a short cut to looking strong and performing like a champion should be warned — steroids can kill. Birgit Dressel, a West German heptathlete who used drugs including steroids, was fourth at the European championships in 1986. She was dead before the year was out with a collapsed immune system. Lyle Alzado, an American footballer, died in 1992 from brain cancer that he said was brought on by years of steroid abuse. Last year James Kevell, a London bodybuilder, became so crazed after taking a huge dose of anabolic steroids that he ran head-first into a wall and died.

Meanwhile the kids from the gyms are still queuing up for their needles and in Harrow they are still looking for a "Steroid Worker". It sounds like hard work to me.

JOHN BRYANT

Davis Cup provides fitting finale

Edberg looking forward to life in the tramlines

Retirement should suit Stefan Edberg. He is the retiring type — always has been. So it is probable that next Monday morning, when the moment of truth arrives, the racquets will not be ritually burnt or hurled into the nearest lake, but stashed neatly in the cupboard just in case Edberg, one of the great champions of the game, needs a little exercise a month or two from now.

Whether Edberg, the double Wimbledon champion, can shuffle off in his carpet slippers with one final memory tucked into his dressing-gown pocket, will be decided in Malmö this weekend, when Sweden take on a fitfully talented France team in an unlikely final of the Davis Cup. Victory would provide an apt conclusion to Edberg's distinguished career. His opening singles match will be his fiftieth in the cup, and a record of won 35, lost 14, stands comparison with the best. Now, perhaps, it is the turn of the Davis Cup, with its quaint format, to lift him to one last peak.

ANDREW LONGMORE



"I feel very relaxed about it," Edberg said. "It's a team effort, we support each other, and that makes it easier. It's a great opportunity for me to finish my career playing in a Davis Cup final. To win would be fantastic. If we lose, it is still a nice way to go out. It's not the end of the world."

Nor will retirement be the end of Edberg's world in the way that it was for Bjorn Borg and Mats Wilander, his compatriots. There will be no

comebacks, though, at 30, he has plenty of time for them. "Unthinkable," he said. "I know that coming back on the tour — playing week in, week out — that time is over. If I continued to play, I could probably still win a tournament, maybe keep playing for another two or three years. I am still fit enough, but I couldn't win a grand slam tournament — he won six. Once that chance is gone, it's better to leave the tennis at home and forget about it."

It helps that Edberg has known perfection and cannot let himself, as so many champions have done, that next best is good enough. So finely balanced was Edberg's game, never best tended to be awful, anyway; but that has not made the decline any less painful to watch or to endure. Bit by bit, starting with that impossibly athletic service, the game that touched genius in a straight-sets defeat of Jim Courier in the 1991 final of the US Open, and earned \$20 million (about £13 million) in prize-money, disintegrated until even the volley, the full stop in most of Edberg's on-court conversations, finally succumbed to a halt. In Dubai earlier this year, Edberg contemplated abandoning his farewell tour and giving up right there.

"It's the worst thing you've been at the top and you feel yourself slipping," he said. "It comes to a point when things you could have done in your sleep, you can't do anymore. Shots which are not possible to miss, you start missing."

Like the one that cost him the third set against Mikael Tillström on a miserable evening at Wimbledon. "A simple forehand volley," he said. "I missed it 4-2 up in the tie-break and missed it by an inch. It's what happens when you get older."



Edberg intends to slip quietly into the shadows after his retirement this weekend

you lose a step and a step is time."

Edberg lost and the authorities at Wimbledon were rightly criticised for treating him — one of their great champions — so shabbily. Edberg shrugs at the misfortune. "I had one bad day through that period and it happened to be that one," he said.

Edberg claims to be looking forward to retirement, but only when the new year comes and the Australian Open signals the start of the new season and life without tennis truly hits home, probably the same time

that the tennis public will be wondering why everyone plays the same way these days. Sadly, Edberg has seen no successors willing to pound his tip-toe beat to the net.

"Serve and volley is too predictable now unless you do it to perfection," he said. "Guys just stand in with their big rackets and take the ball on the rise. The ball is coming back so much quicker."

Sooner or later I will pick up my rackets again, because you can still play, it's great exercise, but instead of playing twice a day every day,

maybe it will be three times a week. If I feel like it, I might play some exhibitions. I just hope that when I [retirement] hits me, I will be busy enough thinking about other things."

He has set up a tennis foundation to help young children in Sweden and will do some public relations work for Adidas, his long-time sponsor. He will still be based in London with his wife, Annette, and daughter, Emilie, and has bought a farm near his parents' home in southern Sweden. It does not have a tennis court. Nor will it.

SQUASH

Broxbourne suffer reversal of fortune

FOR Broxbourne, moving from the sublime to the ridiculous has taken just two weeks (Colin McQuillan writes). First, a fortnight ago, the National Squash League club put Surbiton, the fully professional members of the Super Squash League, out of the inter-league SSL Cup; this week, the memory of that performance was forgotten as Broxbourne were deprived of a vital win in their own competition by a double disqualification in their match against Phillips Windows Chichester.

Indeed, even their victory at Surbiton, against a three-strong line-up including the England international, Simon Parke and Tony Hands, has caused problems. Peter Gunter, the Broxbourne captain, said of the forthcoming quarter-final against Linsfield on December 16: "It is a home tie and we have Peter Marshall, the former world No 2, perhaps returning by then

from his chronic fatigue syndrome problems, but we operate on tight budgets and this means we have to fund another match we did not calculate for."

Broxbourne, who had led Group B of the National League, fell to a 2-3 defeat at Chichester after the local match refereeing co-ordinator, Devon Kandiah, awarded the second-string rubber to the home team when a loose drive from Julian Wellings struck Nathan Dugan, of Chichester, in the eye, and then disqualified Stuart Cowie for returning late to court for the fifth game of his fourth-string rubber against Lee Drew.

With Tim Garner losing at first string to Danny Meddings and Peter Genever faring similarly against Rodney Durbach at third string, the match was level at 2-2 before Linda Charman clinched a home win by beating Stephanie Brind 3-0 in the women's fifth-string match.

Answers from page 46

MYKINIC

(a) Pronounced as picnic. Short and squat in build, with small hands and feet, short limbs and neck, a round face, and domed abdomen. "I see he has the true pyknic build," you remark to Alexandra, who is proudly displaying her new baby round the office. "Strange. I thought that was always inherited. Good Heavens. I don't suppose..."

(b) A tendency to remember a task or duty that we have not yet completed, or even got around to. This is a term from the language of psychology, and describes a condition to which all of us are, to varying degrees, prone.

EMUNTOURY

(a) Of nose-blowing. Or any organ of the body that disposes of waste products. "Our speaker at the Institution tonight is well-known to all of us. His emunatory achievements are an object lesson for all of us."

LIMPOPO

(a) The avocado. Named for a river, otherwise known as the Crocodile River, in southern Africa. This usage derives from the writings of Kipling, whose phrase "the great, grey, green, greasy Limpopo" is exactly indicative of the nature of the fruit. The avocado had been introduced to London when Kipling was writing his *Jungle Book*.

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1. Bx7:1 Qx7:1... Kx7:2 Qx7:1... wins the black queen and 1... Rxd7:2 Qx7:1... wins material. 2. Rxd8:3 Qx7:1... wins

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Dated detectives, traded titles, a kooky cook

In mourning for the two fast ladies, I suddenly saw a new career opportunity for them last night. In fact it brightened a dull evening. A detective series it's obvious now that it's such a big, big effort for John Thaw and Kevin Whately to turn out for Inspector Morse (ITV), why doesn't murder-riddled Oxford call on those game girls with a motorbike and a sidecar instead? Check the list of Inspector Morse's distinctions, and Jennifer and Clarissa match them all. They are of a generation: they have a snobbish demeanour, and they drive an interesting vehicle. It's a wonder nobody thought of it before.

The trouble with the classic Morse (and last night's was a classic in all the worst senses) is that it's set in the present day. This Oxford has no incident rooms; its nick is just a quiet office for the Chief Inspector, plus a quiet office for Morse and Lewis. Suspects are

interviewed at riverside pubs, without a tape recorder, while a soggy copy of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act floats past unregarded. Set Morse in the 1950s, and nobody would mind. But now that Prime Suspect has equipped the average viewer with enough procedural expertise to run his own murder inquiry, Inspector Morse just looks silly. So, for all the impact on realism it would have, our heroes might just as well surrender their badges to the two fast ladies at once.

The story last night — *The Daughters of Cain* — was humdrum. Oxford don found dead; suspicion instantly thrown on Brooks, a nasty former college servant; waters muddied by women murdering Brooks with same weapon. As a puzzle, it was OK, if overstretching by about 30 minutes. But on the level of character assumptions it was dire. If a young woman is attractive and

lives in London, she is a prostitute. If a man gets the sack from a college, it's for dealing drugs. If a middle-aged woman teacher removes her cardigan for a teenage thug, he will assist her in murder. In fact, the only believable moment was when Morse questioned Brooks's tearful widow about her husband's criminality. "You said nothing while he dealt in drugs," she snarled accusingly. "Because it got you a new kitchen!" At which point she looked around lamely and waved an arm. "Well, the kitchen did need doing."

Over on BBC2, John Alexander's *Modern Times* film brought an interesting slant. And if you think that sentence is unfinished, you are quite wrong. Alexander's *To the Manor Bought* may have been ostensibly concerned with the bizarre modern trafficking of baronies, but it was mainly about setting camera tri-

ps of showing that the social world has turned upside down by showing it — well, literally upside down. Water flowed uphill; chess sets defied gravity, and viewers clutched their chair-arms against the rollercoaster effect. Perhaps the larky angles were to remind us it was all rather funny — with harmless chaps in pullovers seriously calling themselves "The Baron of Treragh" — but unfortunately some of us were too busy to laugh, being regularly sick into a paper bag.

Meanwhile, what is a purchased title really worth? This interesting question was answered in every conceivable way, with lots of dig-in-the-ribs reminders that most titles were purchased by the true blues in the first place. Melody, Baroness Urquhart (formerly in showbiz) opined that it would take just three generations for the blue blood to start courting through her descendants' veins, while her hus-

band explained that bringing new people into the system involved aristocratic titles with a new respectability. You've got to admit that's a novel view; or even an interesting slant. In fact, the camera could have cartwheeled at this point, and nobody would have minded.

Gary Rhodes visited North Yorkshire for *Open* Rhodes (BBC2), and it was worth all the daft preamble with a waxwork Dracula in Whitby to meet the board of the Yorkshire Pudding Appreciation Society, who turned up in a short dapper line like undertakers and measured Gary's puddings with a special ruler. As a form of self-importance, legitimate membership of the Yorkshire Pudding Appreciation Society certainly beats paying £30,000 for a footling title the Earl of Shrewsbury found at the back of an airing cupboard. The pudding brigade can not only

confer real distinctions (certificates with gold seals, but they get to eat a lot of yummy cooked batter along life's dreary way).

Meanwhile, Gary presented several slightly peculiar recipes with his usual emphatic delivery, which involves much exercising of the elbow joints — rather in the manic-puppet manner of George Michael when he used to sing "Wake me up before you go-go". Last night (whenever he could control his wild forearms long enough) Gary made roast cod and Yorkshire pudding: deep-fried black pudding with home-made tomato ketchup; black treacle pudding with liquorice ripple ice-cream. One might criticise the quantity of pudding, but — sorry, hang on, I've just realised why Gary pretended to be related to Dracula: it was his widow's peak! Ho hum, a visual joke that has taken 12 hours to sink in. I can't help wondering, is this a record?

REVIEW



Lynne Truss

With one leg shorter than the others. Try an experiment. Hold this newspaper in front of you; then drop your right hand by six inches, and cock your head to one side. That was the interesting slant.

Sometimes documentary-makers hit on the perfect Post-Modern style for a nutsy subject like this, and sometimes they don't. *To the Manor Bought* stopped just short

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 - 7.00 **BBC BREAKFAST NEWS** (73441)
 - 8.00 **BBC BREAKFAST NEWS EXTRA** (73441)
 - 9.25 **STYLE CHALLENGE** (1016374)
 - 9.50 **JILROY** (857548)
 - 10.30 **CAN'T COOK, WON'T COOK** Ainsley Harriott (10206)
 - 11.00 **NEWS** (7) REGIONAL NEWS and weather (231481)
 - 11.05 **THE REALLY USEFUL SHOW** Consumer magazine (497940)
 - 11.55 **THE SUNDAY PEOPLE** (736732)
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 - 6.30 **REGIONAL NEWS** (1497190)
 - 7.00 **WATCHDOG** (7) (587)
 - 7.30 **EASTENDERS** (7) (935)
 - 8.00 **ANNUAL HOSPITAL** presented by Rolf Harris. A reunion with Oscar-winning albino Californian king snake (7) (2515)
 - 8.30 **2004 CHILDREN** Ben Tice to give Jenny the benefit of his wisdom (7) (1022)
 - 8.00 **NEWS** (7) REGIONAL NEWS and weather (732)
 - 9.30 **BUDGET RESPONSE** Liberal Democrat Treasury Spokesmen (7) (59787)
 - 9.40 **THE THIN BLUE LINE** Fly on the Wall With Rowan Atkinson. A BBC crew came to Gershwin to make a documentary about politics (7) (84190)
 - 10.10 **CROCODILE SHOES** Running Man. Released from prison, Jed reclaims himself to a life outside the music business (7) (425175)
 - 11.05 **QUESTION TIME** David Dimbleby chairs a debate from London. His panelists are the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Michael Jack, MP, Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Alastair Spring, MP, Liberal Democrat Treasury Spokesman, Malcolm Bruce, MP, and Dame Pauline Neville-Jones, a managing director of NatWest Markets (7) (248461)
 - 12.05am **CLIVE ANDERSON** ALL TALK with Gene Davis, Andrew Neil and Jim Davidson (7) (740829)
 - 12.40 **SMOKER** — The UK Championship Highlights from the last two quarter-finals (1545707)
 - 1.40 **WEATHER** (187555)

- BBC2**
- 6.00am **OPEN UNIVERSITY: Science** Matters (535854) 6.30 **The Chemistry of Creativity** (857516) 7.15 **See Her** (857516) 7.30 **See Her** (857516) 7.45 **See Her** (857516) 8.00 **See Her** (857516) 8.15 **See Her** (857516) 8.30 **See Her** (857516) 8.45 **See Her** (857516) 9.00 **See Her** (857516) 9.15 **See Her** (857516) 9.30 **See Her** (857516) 9.45 **See Her** (857516) 10.00 **See Her** (857516) 10.15 **See Her** (857516) 10.30 **See Her** (857516) 10.45 **See Her** (857516) 11.00 **See Her** (857516) 11.15 **See Her** (857516) 11.30 **See Her** (857516) 11.45 **See Her** (857516) 12.00 **See Her** (857516) 12.15 **See Her** (857516) 12.30 **See Her** (857516) 12.45 **See Her** (857516) 1.00 **See Her** (857516) 1.15 **See Her** (857516) 1.30 **See Her** (857516) 1.45 **See Her** (857516) 2.00 **See Her** (857516) 2.15 **See Her** (857516) 2.30 **See Her** (857516) 2.45 **See Her** (857516) 3.00 **See Her** (857516) 3.15 **See Her** (857516) 3.30 **See Her** (857516) 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